BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS

BY

G. M. LUXMOORE,

D.Sc. (London.)

W. E. Gladstone

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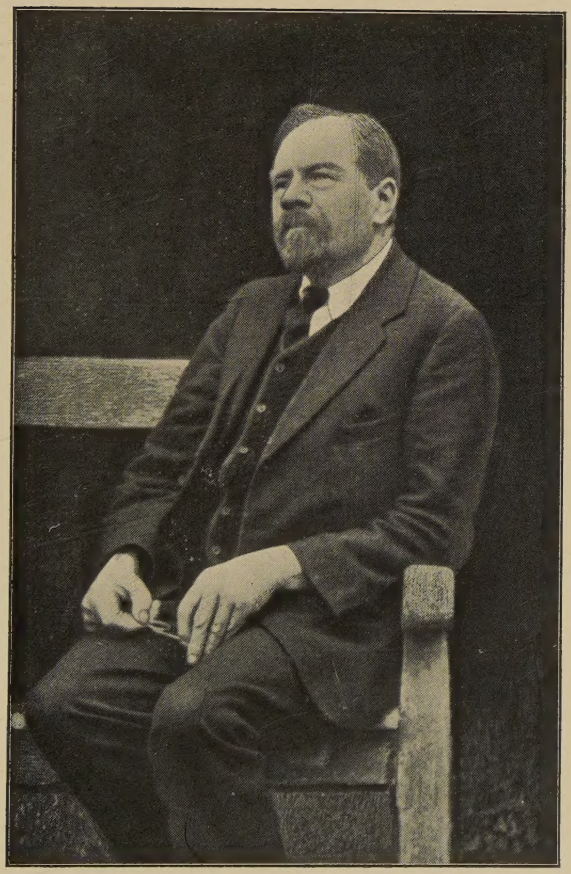

Yours in the Lord

C. M. Sherwood

INTRODUCTION.

"I have many books which I cannot sit down to read; they are indeed good, but like halfpence there goes a great quantity to a small amount. There are silver books, and a very few golden books, but I have one book worth them all called the BIBLE." Such were the words of one[1] of the greatest men this country ever gave birth to, whose bi-centenary was celebrated recently.

When our esteemed co-worker, Mr. George McIntyre suggested the publication of the valuable notes in book form. the present writer at once fell in with the idea, believing that such a book would be "golden."

Ours is a day of rush and hurry, and the demand on all hands is for labour-saving devices.

Not many now are in the privileged circumstances of possessing the NEEDED TRUTH volumes of a quarter of a century ago, when these articles first appeared, ready to hand. Even if they had, in order to find the articles they would have to find first the volumes containing them, and then the precise article required, among many others. All this trouble will be obviated.

Then again there are many who never had the opportunity to read these articles when they were formerly published, and for such, indeed, a treat is in store.

As a book of reference it will be invaluable.

We venture to predict, however, that many on their possession of the volume will read it through with no little interest, pleasure, and profit withal.

It is in no sense what is called a "Harmony of the Gospels." As has been remarked in an early volume of NEEDED TRUTH, efforts without number have been made to blend the four narratives into one continuous and inclusive narrative; but these efforts though with good intention have been unsuccessful in their results. It is evident that no thought was further from Dr. Luxmoore's mind.

[1]Sir Isaac Newton.

One cannot help but be struck with the spirit of reverence which pervades the whole: as if the words were constantly remembered—

> "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,
> for the place whereon thou
> standest is holy ground."

We have the birth, early life, ministry, crucifixion and resurrection, and return to glory of the Lord Jesus presented to us in all their sublime simplicity. There is no straining of a point. Where the text of the Scriptures indicates "no thoroughfare" there is at once a peremptory halt. At the same time, however, the book all through suggests an immense amount of labour in the correlation and comparison of the four Evangelistic Records.

We cannot be too thankful to our God for the preservation of the precious documents, whence we have the four Gospel Narratives in our own tongue, which we might liken to the Altar in the Court of the Tabernacle—four square—giving a view from four different standpoints.

The relative importance of these four witnesses is very great. Whilst by no means detracting even one jot from the importance and value of the God-breathed Scriptures (see 2 Timothy **3.** 16), yet obviously some portions of these are more vital unto practical life and godliness than are others.

As an illustration we might take the human body. Many parts, such as legs, arms, ears, eyes, may be taken away without affecting the life, but take away a vital part such as the heart and life immediately ceases.

The present writer very distinctly remembers the author of the following pages giving as an illustration of this the opening chapters of 1 Chronicles. Though part of a divine whole, one could not say that they are so important, as, for instance, the four books under review.

These Evangelists' Records are indeed of superlative value, and one cannot read and become acquainted with them without becoming more acquainted with and in some increased measure like the One of inestimable worth of whom they speak and whose very words in brief they record. Thus shall the desire be verified individually in our case, "**That I may know Him.**"

It will be found that we have left untouched practically the original text. But in view of the fact that the book will be used largely for reference we have thought it desirable that a simple index should be added. To give effect to this we have had to supplement very largely the comparatively few original headlines, principally from chapters I to XXVI. In doing so we have adopted in many cases the exact words of the text, and where this was found impossible we have endeavoured to adhere to the general style and character of the book. We have also thought well to eliminate anything of a controversial character. Items of correspondence we have placed as appendixes at the close that the reader's attention may not be diverted from the main subject matter and also for more smoothness in reading generally.

We have ventured to add the ten verses of Dr. Luxmoore's beautiful hymn No. 5 in PSALMS HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS in most cases but not invariably at the opening of chapters where the subject matter corresponds with the verses. It will be observed that the hymn generally portrays the life and character of the Lord Jesus in striking harmony with the contents of these pages.

Praying that the Spirit of Truth may use this humble volume to enlighten and instruct those into whose hands it may come, we commit the pages to the reader's earnest perusal.

J. CROSTHWAITE RADCLIFFE.

CHAPTER I.

Luke 1. to 2. 39.

The opening words of the Gospel according to Luke make plain that he was not an eye-witness of the events which he records. He claims, however, to have made himself thoroughly acquainted with the course of all things from authentic information. If it were regarded merely as a human compilation, the narrative of Luke demands credence as an orderly account of well known and uncontrovertible facts. Besides and above which, knowing that in this history we have the work of the Divine Spirit, we shall look therein for manifestation of such eternal wisdom as a mere human writer could never exhibit.

That Luke's account is an orderly narrative is clearly stated.[1] Thus, if we are sure that the order of occurrence is not followed in any passage, we have positive evidence that the changed order has definite significance.

Note from verse 4 the advantage of written testimony as giving certainty to the knowledge of that which has been learnt by word of mouth (see margin of Revised Version).

The angel's appearance to Zacharias and the circumstances attending the conception and birth of his son John (the Baptist) are only recorded by Luke. I think there is no other mention of Zacharias and Elisabeth. It is worth noting the circumstantial detail which is given here in this connexion. The dignity and honour accruing to John the Baptist from these circumstances must not be lost sight of. No one had ever arisen amongst the sons of men who was greater than he.

[1]The word καθεξῆς (kathĕxēs), in order, used in verse 3, occurs five times in the New Testament, and only in Luke's writings. Its construction and signification in Luke 8. 1 and Acts 3. 24 are somewhat different. But its use in Acts 11. 4 and 18. 23 helps to give a clear idea of its meaning in Luke 1. 3.

Like Samson, he was the son of a woman who had previously been barren; and Elisabeth, like the mother of Isaac, was a woman of advanced years. Judges **13** may be profitably read for comparison and contrast.

But the most notable perhaps of all those things which distinguished John the Baptist are the remarkable words

> "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb."

Let it be observed that all which enhances the worth and dignity of John redounds to the honour of the One Whose forerunner he was, the latchet of Whose shoes even he was not worthy to unloose.

The Annunciation.

Whilst John was the son of his parents' old age, the reverse was true of his Divine Cousin. Six months later than his appearance to Zacharias, Gabriel was sent to a young woman who was a virgin, a kinswoman of Elisabeth, to announce to her the unique honour which was to become hers as mother according to the flesh of Him Who was Son of the Most High.

We do not know the relationship that existed between Elisabeth and Mary. The former was a descendant of Aaron, the High Priest, whilst the latter was of the royal line, being probably the daughter of Heli, a descendant of David through his son Nathan. But there will have been some intermarriage between the two families a generation or so previous to the date of the Annunciation.[1]

Note here Mary's faith. Her inquiry, "How shall this be?" is evidently different in its character from the "Whereby shall I know this?" of Zacharias.

Contrast also her believing words, "Be it unto me according to thy word" with the ear our first mother gave to the Serpent's "Hath God said?"

How beautiful the testimony of the unborn babe in the womb of Elisabeth when the mother of her Lord came unto her! Surely many Christians err as greatly in withhold-

[1] Annunciation, the act of announcing, specifically the announcement to Mary by the Angel Gabriel of the Incarnation of Christ. —*Century Dictionary.*

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ing reverence and honour from Mary as some persons do in yielding her idolatrous homage! Note that twice she calls herself bondmaid of the Lord.

Mary's inspired song abounds in praise to God, and aptly summarizes in few words those ways which are not as man's ways.

The prophecy of Zacharias, while full of comely praise, contains also definite teaching as to the mission of his great son.

This lad, though full of the Holy Spirit, grew up in the solitude of the desert ere he commenced his work.

The Date of the Lord's Birth.

The date of the birth of Mary's Firstborn seems to be clearly fixed by the enrolment that Quirinius made, though we may not have knowledge needful to recognize it.

Sent from th' eternal Father
Who dwells in light above,
Came forth the Son most holy
To manifest His love.

This is the wondrous story:—
Born of a Hebrew maid
The Lord of life and glory;
And in a manger laid.

Can any fail to dwell on the marvellous down-coming of the Son of Man when we see Him laid as an Infant in the manger? How significant the words "No room for Him in the inn." We may ask the question oftentimes, Is there no room for Him here or there—in the heart, in the family, in the assembly?

The shepherds of whom we read in Luke were probably Israelites, as the wise men of Matthew were Gentiles. The faith of the shepherds, their haste and much else form examples well worthy of imitation.

Note the careful attention to the law of Moses. The Lord was circumcised on the eighth day. Then, according to the law (for which see Leviticus **12.**), thirty-three days afterwards He was presented to the Lord and atonement was made for her. Note the poverty marked by the pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

But mark the contrast. On the one hand, the two birds to be offered, one for righteousness and one for sin for her atonement; on the other hand, in her feeble arms she carried Him Who said when He came into the world:

"Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not,
But a body didst Thou prepare for Me;
In whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin
Thou hadst no pleasure:
Then said I,
Lo, I am come
(In the roll of the Book it is written of Me)
To do Thy will, O God."

One man at least perceived this in that notable day. For to him watching there year after year and day after day, whilst sacrifices and offerings that never could take away sin were being offered, it had been revealed that he should not fail ere he was carried to Abraham's bosom to behold the Lord's Christ, His salvation.

And in the feeble little Infant that lay helpless in His mother's arms He beheld the Eternal One Who had come to seek and to save the lost. Receiving the Child into those arms which for many years had known the labour and sorrow of old age and weakness, he willingly took his departure in peace—peace which man can neither give nor take; peace because he had seen the Lord's Christ, His salvation, though many a year was to pass ere the atoning work was done. Salvation, God's salvation, was before his eyes and in his arms. So now, so ever. To see Him, to receive Him, is to see salvation and to enjoy peace.

Anna too, a still older watcher, came up at that very hour. No luck was this nor happy chance, no! worshipping there continually, she was at hand in the hour of opportunity, for which, in sooth, she had cause to give thanks to God. And in her woman's sphere happy was she to tell of Him to all the little remnant that were looking for the redemption.

Then back to Nazareth to obscurity.

CHAPTER II.

Matthew 1. 1-17; Luke 3. 23-38.

The Gospel according to Matthew opens very differently to that written by Luke. That Matthew was an eye-witness of much which he records follows clearly from the details of his narrative. But probably the fact that he makes no claim in any introduction or preface to having seen or heard what he sets down is meant for one thing to prevent our being unduly occupied with the human instrument through which God has been pleased to give us this book of generation. If human testimony is required it is to be found here, but here is to be found that which is far beyond and above the testimony of man. Note that He Who is spoken of in these gospels is spoken of by an Equal, who fitly calls Him by His name, Jesus or Jesus Christ. It is God Himself speaking of His Son. Contrariwise in the Epistles the Apostles are taught by the Holy Spirit to call Him Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ and the like.

Genealogies of the Lord Jesus.

In this "book of the generation of Jesus Christ" He is presented as Son of David and Son of Abraham. The genealogy is therefore traced downwards, from Abraham to David the King, from David to Jechoniah, and from Jechoniah to Joseph the husband of Mary. The royal purple of kingly power is here to be observed. A king always receives his authority from one above him, from one before him. Hence it is not for us to crown the Lord Jesus as King or Lord of all. His power and His authority come from above. It is God who crowns Him, it is ours to own Him.

Thus the royal line of descent is seen to reach Joseph, who was however altogether devoid of any actual royal authority or dominion.

The three groups contained in the second, third and fourth paragraphs of Matthew as divided in the Revised Version mark three different aspects of royalty in Abraham's seed.

From Abraham to Jesse and to David in his early days we trace a royal seed—men set apart by God in His purpose, but having no sphere of rule except in their own households and amongst their own associates.

David became a king in very deed. The kingdom reached its zenith in the days of the great and wise Solomon; but continued, though shorn of its magnificence, until the days of Jechoniah.

From Jechoniah onwards there was no independent monarch in Israel, and the royal line which God had elected seems to have become obscure as the time of the promise drew nigh; for Joseph had no such place in Israel as had Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel.

We should contrast this tracing of the descent of Joseph down from Abraham and David with the backward tracing through Heli (perhaps Mary's father) which we find in Luke **3.** The latter is up to Adam and to God, and marks the human sonship of the Incarnate One. The two pedigrees will be found to coincide at several points, as we have sought to make evident in the accompanying tabular presentment of them. In this table the left hand column is to be read upwards, and shows the seventy-six steps that we count in tracing back the son of man, the seed of woman, to Adam and to God.

The middle column gives the royal pedigree from Abraham, through David and Jechoniah, to Joseph, of whom as Mary's husband the Lord Jesus Christ was heir, though by him He was not begotten.

The numeration of the generations in Matthew offers difficulties which are beyond the ability of the present writer to solve.[1] In the first group if we make Abraham one then David becomes fourteen. If in the second David be made one Jechoniah would become fifteen. If we make Solomon one Jechoniah becomes fourteen. But we must make Jechoniah one in the third series in order to reach fourteen as the number for the Christ. It is clear that we have here that which we cannot understand.

[1]See Appendix I., Page 174.

LUKE.	MATTHEW.	NOTES.
(Read upwards)		
76 the son of God.	... ...	... (see Genesis **1.** 26)
75 the son of Adam,	... ...	... Of Eve, younger son
74 the son of Seth,	... ...	... (76-66 Genesis **5**)
73 the son of Enos,	... ...	... (75-55 **1** Chron. **1**)
72 the son of Cainan,		
71 the son of Mahalaleel,		
70 the son of Jared,		
69 the son of Enoch,		
68 the son of Methuselah,		
67 the son of Lamech,		
66 the son of Noah,	... ...	... probably a younger son.
65 the son of Shem,	... ...	... (65-56 Genesis **11.** 10-32)
64 the son of Arphaxad,		
63 the son of Cainan,	... ...	... Cainan's name is omitted in Gen. **11.**
62 the son of Shelah,		and 1 Chron. **1.** of A.V. and
61 the son of Eber,		R.V. It is however contained
60 the son of Peleg,		in the LXX. Greek version in
59 the son of Reu,		Gen. **11.**
58 the son of Serug,		
57 the son of Nahor,		
56 the son of Terah,	*(Read downwards)*	(Gen. **11.** 26-32)
55 the son of Abraham,	= 1, 2 Abraham begat Isaac;	In old age. Of Sarah
54 the son of Isaac,	= 2, 3 and Isaac begat Jacob;	Rebekah's younger son
53 the son of Jacob,	= 3, 4 and Jacob b. Judah and his breth.;	Fourth son of Leah
52 the son of Judah,	= 4, 5 and Judah b. Perez & Zerah of Tamar;	(Gen. **49.** 8-12)
51 the son of Perez,	= 5, 6 and Perez begat Hezron;	(5-14 Ruth **4.** 18-22)
50 the son of Hezron,	= 6, 7 and Hezron begat Ram;	
49 the son of Arni,	= 7, 8 and Ram begat Amminadab;	
48 the son of Amminadab,	= 8, 9 and Amminadab begat Nahshon;	(see Num. **7.** 12)
47 the son of Nahshon,	= 9, 10 and Nahshon begat Salmon;	
46 the son of Salmon,	= 10, 11 and Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab;	(see Josh. **2** and **6.** 22-25)
45 the son of Boaz,	= 11, 12 and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth;	(Ruth **4**)
44 the son of Obed,	= 12, 13 and Obed begat Jesse;	
43 the son of Jesse,	= 13, 14 and Jesse begat David the King.	(1 Sam. **16**)
42 the son of David,	1 And David begat Solomon of her that	(1 Chron. **3.** 5)
41 the son of Nathan,	had been wife of Uriah;	(2 Sam. **11.** 12)
40 the son of Mattatha,	2 and Solomon begat Rehoboam;	Of Naamah the Ammonitess

39 the son of Menna,
38 the son of Melea,
37 the son of Eliakim,
36 the son of Jonam,
35 the son of Joseph,
34 the son of Judas,
33 the son of Symeon,
32 the son of Levi,
31 the son of Matthat,
30 the son of Jorim,
29 the son of Eliezer,
28 the son of Jesus,
27 the son of Er,
26 the son of Elmadam,
25 the son of Cosam,
24 the son of Addi,
23 the son of Melchi,

22 the son of Neri,
21 the son of Shealtiel,
20 the son of Zerubbabel,
19 the son of Rhesa,
18 the son of Joanan,
17 the son of Joda,
16 the son of Josech,
15 the son of Semein,
14 the son of Mattathias,
13 the son of Maath,
12 the son of Naggai,
11 the son of Esli,
10 the son of Nahum,
9 the son of Amos,
8 the son of Mattathias,
7 the son of Joseph,
6 the son of Jannai,
5 the son of Melchi,
4 the son of Levi,
3 the son of Matthat,
2 the son of Heli,
was supposed) of Joseph
Jesus . . . being the son (as

(Read upwards)

3 and Rehoboam begat Abijah;
4 and Abijah begat Asa;
5 and Asa begat Jehoshaphat;
6 and Jehoshaphat begat Joram;
7 and Joram

begat

Uzziah;
8 and Uzziah begat Jotham;
9 and Jotham begat Ahaz;
10 and Ahaz begat Hezekiah;
11 and Hezekiah begat Manasseh;
12 and Manasseh begat Amon;
13 and Amon begat Josiah;
14 and Josiah begat
Jechoniah and his brethren, at
the time of the carrying away to B.

And after the carrying away to B.

1, 2 Jechoniah begat Shealtiel;
= 2, 3 and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel;
3, 4 and Zerubbabel begat Abiud;

4, 5 and Abiud begat Eliakim;

5, 6 and Eliakim begat Azor;

6, 7 and Azor begat Sadoc;

7, 8 and Sadoc begat Achim;

8, 9 and Achim begat Eliud;

9, 10 and Eliud begat Eleazar;

10, 11 and Eleazar begat Matthan;

11, 12 and Matthan begat Jacob;

12, 13 and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was
14 born Jesus, who is called Christ.

Of Maacah, Absalom's daughter
(1-14, see 1, 2 Kings, 2 Chron.)
Of Azubah (1 Kings 22. 42)
married Athaliah, Ahab's daughter
Joram's youngest son was Ahaziah
Ahaziah's youngest son was Joash
Joash's son was Amaziah
Amaziah's son was Uzziah
(see Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah)

(see Jeremiah, Lamentations, Zephaniah)
Josiah's son was Jehoiakim
Jehoiakim's son was Jechoniah
called also Jechoniah and Coniah

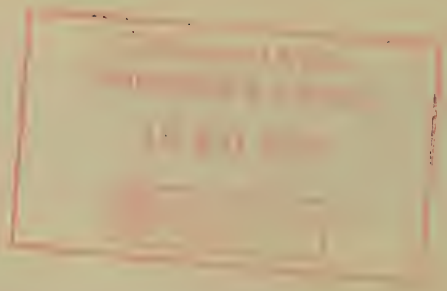
(Ezra 1-6. Haggai, Zechariah)

[*Old Testament History ceases at about this period.*]

The right hand column contains amongst other notes mention of those in the royal line as given in the Old Testament who are omitted in the Matthew genealogy.

As the Holy Spirit has been pleased to set this genealogy in the forefront of the purple[1] gospel, we have thought well to annotate briefly what may perhaps be regarded as one of the less interesting portions of Scripture (but certainly not unimportant) before passing on to the account in Matthew of the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Flight into Egypt.

[1]Purple, the royal colour.



CHAPTER III.

Matthew 1. 18—2. 23.

The careful reader will note that while Luke tells of the visit of Gabriel to Mary, Matthew records the appearance of an angel of the Lord to Joseph. This is in keeping with the prominence that Matthew is taught to give to the Lord's claims as Son of David, of whom Joseph was the lineal descendant and rightful heir; whereas Luke is taught rather to present Him as Son of Man and Seed of Woman. These are distinguishing characteristics.

Note however also that which is alike in both. For example, both to Joseph and to Mary, it was commanded that His name should be called Jesus, and notwithstanding important differences the words of the angel of the Lord to Joseph have much in common with that which was spoken to Mary through Gabriel.

Again, Matthew equally with Luke clearly shows that the Christ was distinguished from all mankind as being woman's seed; begotten not by man but of the Holy Spirit. See margin of Revised Version, Matthew **1.** 20. The word used in Luke **1.** 31 is a different one.

Luke equally with Matthew bears definite testimony that the Lord Jesus was Son of David, and in common also with Mark and John designates Him Son of God.

The marginal reading of Matthew **1.** 18: "Now the birth of the Christ was on this wise," rests especially on the testimony of Irenaeus. The word "Jesus" is contained in all the Greek manuscripts of the Scripture that are extant, but it is omitted in the Old Latin and Curetonian Syriac versions, and Irenaeus (who lived about two centuries earlier than the oldest extant Greek manuscripts

[א and B] were written) expressly states that the clause reads, "The birth of the Christ." It seems therefore impossible to be positive as to which is the correct reading.

The Adoration of the Magi and the Flight Into Egypt.

The relation in time between the Adoration of the Magi and the flight into Egypt, and the events recorded in Luke **2.** 22-39 must now be considered. We must not let any difficulties that may present themselves hinder our earnest endeavour to learn all we can of the early life of the Divine Child.

Artists commonly represent the Magi as adoring the Infant in the manger at Bethlehem, where the shepherds had found Him. If this were so, and the flight into Egypt followed, where Joseph and Mary and the Young Child remained until Herod was dead, it seems impossible to understand how they could have come up to Jerusalem according to the law of Moses, when the days of purification were fulfilled, namely, when the Infant was about a month old.

On the contrary, the passage in Matthew that we are reading seems to have a different meaning to this.

First, it seems reasonable to suppose that the heavenly apparition, the Star of the King of the Jews was first seen in the East at the time of the Lord's birth. The Magi then would have taken some little time to travel to Jerusalem. When they arrived there they were directed to Bethlehem, which was a place probably of no great size, and only about six miles from Jerusalem (see map, No. 7, in Revised Bible).

Note now that when they went their way, lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the Young Child was. Where was this? It does not say Bethlehem, and it does not seem to the present writer at all clear that it was that village. Why the star should have been needed to lead them to a small place six miles away, and show them a spot to which any inhabitant could probably have directed them is not plain.

Then, again, when Herod in his wrath determined to secure the destruction of One Whom he feared would be a dangerous rival, the cowardly tyrant fixed on two years as the maximum age for the victims of his sinister crime. Doubtless one setting so small a value on human life would have allowed a wide margin. But still he made careful calculations from the time that the star appeared, and therefore we might reasonably suppose that the Infant would have been at any rate nearer a year than a month in age at the time of the flight. Secular history cannot give us much help here—it just testifies that the birth of the Lord and the death of Herod the Great both took place about four years before the commencement of what is called the Christian era or *Anno Domini*.

Now seeing that the journey to Jerusalem for purification could not have been during the sojourn in Egypt, and that afterwards was probably too late, we conclude that it occurred previously.

It remains to compare the references to Nazareth in the two gospels.

It certainly appears as if in Luke **2.** 39, they are represented as returning to Nazareth immediately after the journey to Jerusalem. If this were so it would have been in Nazareth that the Magi found the King, and we see nothing in Matthew **2.** 1-12, inconsistent with this. There is simply a reason given, or rather two reasons are given in verses 22, 23, why Nazareth became the home of the early youth.

It cannot however be considered beyond doubt that Luke **2.** 39 has the meaning we have given. It is clear that Luke has nothing to say as to the Adoration of the Magi or the Flight into Egypt; that all he records from the Purification to the twelfth year is contained in verses 39 and 40; and therefore it seems as reasonable to suppose that the Adoration and the Flight precede the return to Nazareth of verse 39 as that it follows after. Indeed we would be disposed to regard this as the most natural explanation were it not that the word ὡς, hōs, when, of verse 39 seems to have a definiteness of meaning scarcely consistent with this interpretation.

Order of Events in Matthew 2. and Luke 2.

The three ways in which it may seem possible to arrange the events in Matthew 2. and Luke 2. 1-39, side by side are given in the following tables (we do not think the third however is possible) :—

I.

Matthew 2.	Luke 2.
	Nazareth to Bethlehem, v. 4.
Birth of the Christ.	Birth of the Christ, v. 7.
Magi see Star, v. 2.	Angel appears to Shepherds, v. 8.
	Shepherds go to Bethlehem, v. 16.
	Circumcision on 8th day, v. 21.
	Purification after one month, v. 22.
Magi arrive in Jerusalem, v. 1.	
Herod sends for them, v. 7.	
Magi find the Infant, v. 11.	
Flight into Egypt, v. 13.	
Return to Nazareth, v. 21.	Return to Nazareth, v. 39.

II.

Matthew 2.	Luke 2.
	Nazareth to Bethlehem v. 4.
Birth of the Christ.	Birth of the Christ, v. 7.
Magi see Star, v. 2.	Angel appears to Shepherds, v. 8.
	Shepherds go to Bethlehem, v. 16.
	Circumcision on 8th day, v. 21.
	Purification after one month, v. 22.
	Return to Nazareth, v. 39.
Magi arrive in Jerusalem, v. 1.	
Herod sends for them, v. 7.	
Magi find the Infant, v. 11	
(? in Nazareth?)	
Flight into Egypt, v. 13.	
Return (again) to Nazareth, v. 21.	

III.

Matthew 2.	Luke 2.
	Nazareth to Bethlehem, v. 4.
	Birth of the Christ, v. 7.
Magi see Star, v. 2.	Angel appears to Shepherds, v. 8.
Magi arrive in Jerusalem, v. 1.	Shepherds go to Bethlehem, v. 16.
Herod sends for them, v. 7.	Circumcision 8th day, v. 21.
Magi find the Infant, v. 11.	
Flight into Egypt, v. 13.	
Return to Nazareth, v. 21.	
	Purification after one month, v. 22.
	Return (again) to Nazareth, v. 39.

Old Testament References in Matthew 1.

We note here the frequent references to Old Testament, which form a striking feature in Matthew. These we proceed to enumerate :—

Quotation 1.—Matthew **1.** 23 : This is taken from Isaiah **7.** Note that Immanu El [1] is not merely a name. First and chiefly it is a statement of fact ; as we find it translated in Isaiah **7.** 14 margin, God is with us ; the copula " is " being clearly implied in the original not only as the Old Testament Revisers show us in the Hebrew, but as we venture to say in the Greek of Matthew **1.** 23, which we think should be similarly translated " which is, being interpreted, God is with us."

Quotation 2.—Matthew **2.** 6 : See Micah **5.** 2.

Quotation 3.—Matthew **2.** 15. The original application was to the earthly Israel ; see Hosea **11.** 1.

Quotation 4.—Matthew **2.** 18 ; Jeremiah **31.** 15.

Of these quotations (1) is said to have been spoken by the Lord through the prophet ; (2) it is written through the prophet. The Revisers' use of " by " in the text here is to be understood in the light of the words in their preface. "We have borne in mind the comprehensive character of such [English] prepositions as . . . by . . ." Certainly there is a use of the English " by " which expresses the meaning well enough, but the student of Scripture should understand that the same Greek preposition διὰ, dia, through, by means of, is used in the four places mentioned ; (3) spoken by the Lord through the prophet ; (4) spoken through Jeremiah the prophet. So as to the preposition in the next quotation, which however has notable points of difference.

Quotation 5.—That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets that He should be called a Nazarene. This is not a verbal quotation as the Authorized Version seems to say. The word " that " indicates that the tenour of the Old Testament prophets and not their words are referred to. Mark also that it is not one prophet but many, or perhaps all. This has been interpreted as meaning thus :

[1] See Appendix I., Page 177.

The prophets witnessed that He should be despised of men. Inhabitants of Nazareth were so looked down upon. There seems something lacking in this explanation. Be this as it may, it was of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that the youth of the Incarnate One was spent in this humble village, where He was brought up by Joseph the Carpenter, and learnt his trade. Compare Matthew **13.** 55 with Mark **6.** 3. Good would it have been for many lesser servants of God if they too had lived for a good spell of years in subjection to an earthly master, what time they learnt to earn their bread by the sweat of the brow and profess honest occupations for necessary uses. The Holy Boy found time to read the Scriptures in the intervals of using the hammer and whetting the axe.

CHAPTER IV.

Luke 2. 40-52.

The Scriptures that we have previously read present to us the blessed Lord Jesus in His earliest days where He plays but a passive part in the scenes depicted. They teem with deepest interest in many ways and especially to parents. For with what infinite treasure were Joseph and Mary intrusted.

Youthful Days of the Lord Jesus.

He grew in human stature,
In every childlike grace;
He lived a life most holy
In all His youthful days;

But Luke **2.** 40 (R. V. M.) tells us that "the Child grew, and waxed strong, becoming full of wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."

A few words may be here said as to certain Greek words that occur in this passage and elsewhere.

1. παῖς, pais, a boy (or girl) but often correctly translated servant.
2. παιδίον, paidiŏn, a little boy (or girl), a child; this word is the diminutive of παῖς, pais.
3. τέκνον, tĕknŏn, a child with the sense of relationship, from τίκτω, tiktō, I bear or bring forth (children).
4. τεκνίον, tekniŏn, diminutive of child, a little child (only occurs in John **13.** 33, Galatians **4.** 19, and in John's first epistle).
5. υἱός, huiŏs, a son (resembling the father).
6. βρέφος, brephos, a babe, an infant, unborn or just born.

1. The word pais no doubt originally means a boy as used here in Luke **2.** 43. It comes however to be used of grown up persons who are servants, as in Matthew **14.** 2. So too of the Lord Himself in, for instance, Matthew **12.** 18. This usage is somewhat similar to a way in which collo-

quially we often call dependants boys regardless of age (so the French garçon). In some cases it is difficult to tell in which sense the word is used (see Matthew **8.** 6).

2. In Matthew **2.** young child is the translation of paidion, meaning little boy, and this is the word translated child in Luke **2.** 40, whilst the word male children in Matthew **2.** 16 is pais, boy.

3. Teknon is the real Greek equivalent of the English word child. It occurs in verse 48 of the chapter before us, where son must be regarded as a mistranslation.

5. The true word huiŏs, son, occurs for example in Matthew **2.** 15. We subjoin most of the occurrences of these words in the chapters we have been reading, with a few words of context only. There will be no difficulty probably in identifying the words.

Matthew **1. 2.**

* * * Jesus Christ Son of David, Son of Abraham * * * * * she shall bring forth a Son * * * and shall bring forth a Son * * * she had brought forth a Son * * * * * search out carefully concerning the Little Boy * * * it came and stood over where the Little Boy was * * * saw the Little Boy with Mary His mother * * * * * take the Little Boy and His mother * * * Herod will seek the Little Boy * * * Out of Egypt did I call my Son * * * Herod * slew all the boys that were in Bethlehem * * from two years old and under * * Rachel weeping for her children * * * take the Little Boy and His mother.

Luke **1. 2.**

* * * they had no child * * * Elisabeth shall bear thee a son * * * many of the sons of Israel shall he turn * * * to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children * * * * * bring forth a Son * * shall be called Son of the Most High * * shall be called Holy, the Son of God * * conceived a son in her old age * * * * the babe leaped in her womb * * the babe leaped in my womb * * * *He hath holpen Israel His servant (παῖς, pais) * * * she brought forth a son * * to circumcise the little boy * * * What then shall this little boy be? * * * In the house of His servant (παῖς, pais) David * * * and thou, little boy, shalt be called prophet of the Most High * * * And the little boy grew

* * * * * she brought forth her firstborn Son * * * * Ye shall find a Babe * * the Babe lying in the manger * * * spoken to them about this Little Boy * * * the parents brought in the Little Boy * * * Now lettest Thou Thy servant (δοῦλος, dŏulŏs, slave, not παῖς, pais) * * And the Little Boy grew * * when He was twelve years old * the Boy Jesus * * * Child (that is my Child) why hast Thou thus dealt with us?

The words of verse 40 are remarkable in truth and may perhaps be read alongside of "Though He was a Son yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews **5.** 8).

That the Little Boy grew may be taken to be a necessity of His being truly man, and that He waxed strong might be taken as meaning nearly the same thing. But the following words show that we have here no ordinary record before us. It is further said, "becoming full of wisdom" (R.V. margin).

We must therefore contemplate real growth both mental and physical in Him who was truly a man though very God.

The Boy Jesus and the Scriptures.

It was He who had appeared to Moses in Mount Sinai. From Him Moses had received what he delivered to the sons of Israel and recorded in the Law. From Him Isaiah and Jeremiah had received their messages, and with Him the son of Jesse had held that close communion which made him to be the Sweet Psalmist of Israel. Yet that which was written in the Law and in the Psalms and in the Prophets was read and read again, and learned as we might learn, by Him whom the Heavens cannot contain, when He spent His childhood days with Joseph and Mary in the despised town of Nazareth. His delight was in the law of Jehovah, and in His law did He meditate day and night..

Year by year He went up with His parents to Jerusalem, and when He was twelve years old the curtain is drawn back and we get a glimpse of a scene in the temple that clearly indicates what manner of boy He was and stands in strong contrast to the unworthy and fabulous tales of His youth in which the Apocryphal gospels abound.

For many years He had been reading and studying the temple Scriptures as no boy before or since has ever done. Reading them again and again, meditating, comparing, studying, with perhaps such help as might be obtained in Nazareth from any students of Scripture who resided in a town from which it was currently reported that no good ever came.

But now we find Him in the midst of the teachers of the law, humbly listening to all they could tell Him and seeking by His questions to obtain all the information they could give.

At a later period, upon such men as these we may hear Him pour forth those scathing denunciations that are so little regarded by men who suppose Him to have been a mere kindly and well-meaning philanthropist.

But there is nothing of this judgment to be seen during His boyhood and youth. The Divine Man was a Learner for thirty years ere He began to teach. How instructive an example!

Whatever was the moral character of the teachers of whom we read in Luke **2.** 46, He sat in their midst to hear what they could tell Him. He had not yet begun to teach, as Luke **3.** 23 (R.V.) makes plain. He asked questions of those who sat on Moses' seat, for He was not above learning from others. He was in the right place and in that place to learn all that might be taught.

Alas! for those who would be wiser than their Lord and despise the help of God-given teachers who may be heard in the place where God appoints for His people to be.

Note, however, what follows when He is found by Joseph and Mary. First He explains to them His interest in the things of which He had been speaking with the teachers, They were the things of His Father. So His answer reads in the literal translation of the Greek (see R.V. margin). The reading of the text may, however, convey the more correct sense—He must needs be in His Father's House. The reading of the Authorized Version, also found in R.V. margin, about My Father's business, is certainly not justified—He was transacting no business, but learning the Will of His Father and God.

Subject to His Parents in Nazareth.

Then He goes down with them to Nazareth and was subject unto them. He learnt Joseph's trade as any apprentice might, but better and more faithful was He than any boy before or since. His learning of God's law never interfered with what in His humiliation He accounted to be His duty to His earthly parent and master. Unlike some of His followers whose opportunies for Bible study are filched from their masters' time.

The training of this perfect Deacon and Overseer for the work upon which He was to enter seems to be worthy of special attention in three respects, wherein it may well be imitated by all who seek to be themselves deacons of Christ Jesus or to help others to prepare for the ministry.

First and foremost we have earnest and painstaking study of the Scriptures, commenced at a very early age. In this we find another example worthy of imitation (comparing a servant with his master) in the case of Timothy ; who, thanks to the unfeigned faith which first dwelt in Lois and then in Eunice her daughter, was taught the temple Scriptures by them from his earliest infancy (from a babe, 2 Timothy **3.** 15). Taught by which we venture to say that the faith of mothers may be measured by the earliness of the date at which their young babes are taught the Scriptures.

Secondly we have willingness and earnestness to learn what can be taught as to the meaning and interpretation of Scripture by others who in the will of God are teachers thereof in His House.

The Carpenter.

Thirdly we find that part of the training that God gave to His well-beloved Son consisted in putting Him in a place of subjection to an earthly master, under whose instruction He learned an honest trade. His hands and eyes were trained to fashion and to join. Though the forest trees, the Mount of Olives, and the sun which moves in its appointed course, were all His handiwork, yet He in the days of His flesh learned a human art and earned His bread by the sweat of His brow.

In the light of this training of His how egregious the blunder of those who would separate men who are to become ministers of the word of God from the occupations and trades of others or from the society of their fellow men! (See Titus **3.** 8, 14).

Not less appalling is the too common error of grievously undervaluing the need of study and mental training, above and beyond all of much reading and of earnest meditation on the Holy Scriptures, for those who would be good ministers of Christ Jesus, and must therefore be nourished in the words of the Faith and of the good doctrine.

CHAPTER V.

Matthew **3.**; Mark **1.** 1-13; Luke **3.** 1-20.

The Gospel according to Mark gives no account of the early life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He comes into view as a full grown man, coming from Nazareth to Galilee.

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," are the opening words; and we may well keep this word "beginning" in view, remembering that Luke speaks in his treatise of what "Jesus began both to do and to teach."

The Preaching of John the Baptist.

As a beginning then of this beginning we are introduced to the messenger (angel) sent before the face of Jehovah to prepare His way—"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord (or perhaps rather the voice of one crying, Make ye ready in the wilderness the way of the Lord), make His paths straight."

As to this word "straight" (εὐθὺς, euthus), from it is derived the well-known word "straightway" (εὐθέως, euthĕōs) which occurs so frequently in Mark; somewhere about forty times out of about eighty occurrences in the whole of the New Testament (about fifteen times in Matthew, seventeen times in Luke and Acts, six times in John's writings). One thing therefore especially noticeable in Mark being the directness with which the Lord goes from item to item of His work.

We can throw no light on the difficulty offered by the mention of Isaiah's name in Mark **1.** 2, (R.V.), the first quotation being from Malachi **3.** 1. The second quotation is from Isaiah **40.** 3. Perhaps the words from Malachi should be regarded in the light of a parenthesis. This is probably one of the passages where the higher critics would seek to explain how the writer came to make such a mistake. But as we seek rather to get behind the human penman to the Holy and Divine Author, who cannot err, we would rather seek in humble faith to ask what is meant by the seeming discrepancy.

All three gospels concur in showing that to make the path straight for the coming Saviour, it behoved the forerunner to preach repentance. Note particularly here the words quoted in Luke **3.** 7-14.

By comparison of this scripture (verse 7) with the parallel portion in Matthew (verse 7), it becomes clear that what was said to the multitudes generally was provoked by the presence of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, but who, as we elsewhere learn, were not baptized, probably on account of what would be called by some his ungracious, and uncourtly, and even rude speaking.

Thus early the mountains and valleys began to change places, according to that which is written.

But if Pharisees and Sadducees rejected his baptism, not so the One Who was higher than all, Who did no sin, Who had no sin, Who knew no sin.

Attaining manhood's ripeness,
Midst sinners sinless He;
And though in human likeness,
From human errors free.

The Baptism of the Lord Jesus.

He comes away from His home at Nazareth to Galilee to be baptized. The thirty years now draw to a close; the quiet life in the carpenter's shop has been lived, oh, how beautifully! But beyond this now looms before Him the path of duty and of love. Toil and trouble unknown to Him by experience as yet; and beyond, in the not far distance, the shadow of an awful woe, the darkness of the blackest hour that man has ever known lie at the distance of but a few years hence. With purpose of heart to do the will of His Father and God, be the cost what it may, He comes away from the quiet and tranquil life that notwithstanding its lowliness and hardships was not, methinks, without enjoyment to the perfect man, to face the harder path, to take up the heavier burden, to hate His life and lay it down, for thus in the volume of the book it was written of Him.

And first in deepest lowliness He will be dipped in Jordan's waters by John. John indeed seeks to hinder, but with firmness and decision, and yet in gentle words, He

insists. At the outset of His path these waters of Jordan roll, and under their depths He will now be submerged ere He starts on the work which His Father had given Him to do; leading to deeper waters, when

> . . . all the billows passed o'er Him,
> Our sins they bore Him down;
> For us He met the o'erwhelming flood,
> He met the Almighty's frown.

But if this action of the Son tells clearly of His obedience and submission, it is in a voice which finds an echo in the very heavens above. The heavens were rent asunder, and from the opened vault descended, in bodily form as a dove, the Holy Spirit and came upon Him. The Father also speaks—

"Thou art My Son, My beloved, in Thee I am well pleased."
"This is My Son, My beloved, in Whom I am well pleased."

Straight from this scene the Holy One who had come upon Him drives Him into the wilderness to meet with one who had so successfully assailed the first man in a garden. Here for forty days Satan tempted Him. The wild beasts were there, but neither these nor the Devil could harm, for His trust was in God, and in God was all His delight.

CHAPTER VI.

Matthew 4. 1-11; Luke 4. 1-14.

The Temptation in the Wilderness.

Straight from the token of the Father's approbation the Lord is hurried by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tried and tempted there. There He was proved as gold tried in the fire, and the trial of His faith and virtue far more precious than aught else was to praise and honour and glory.

He entered on His life-work,
Approved by God Most High,
When tempted in the desert
He made the Tempter fly.

The account of this important time is very short, but though there are some points of difficulty, the salient facts stand out in bold relief.

Corresponding to the forty years during which the earthly Israel wandered in the wilderness, the period of the Lord's temptation was forty days—a day for a year (see Numbers 14. 34). During this period He fasted, and at the end He hungered. Then we are told of three definite temptations to evil by the Devil. Whether these three took place at the end of the time, and constituted the whole temptation, or whether the temptation was more or less spread over the whole period, and the three things mentioned are simply chosen for record on account of their intrinsic importance, is not quite clear to the present writer.

The actual order in which the three attacks were made seems to be given in Matthew. For there only (see R.V.) when the temptation to worship the Devil is offered, the Lord is recorded to have said, "Get thee hence, Satan." Then saith the scripture, "Then the Devil leaveth Him, and behold angels came and ministered unto Him." So that

this seems to mark the close of the period. The first temptation is recorded in almost identical words by Matthew and Luke.

" If Thou art the Son of God,

" Command that these stones become loaves " (Matthew R.V. margin).

" Command this stone that it become a loaf " (Luke R.V. margin).

The variation however is enough to show that all the tempter's words are not given in either gospel. Picture the scene—the hungry Man, the Son of God, there in dependence on His Heavenly Father to give Him what the body needed as pleased Him. To Him comes the tempter—If Thou art God's Son Thou hast no need to wait on another; here is a stone, command it to become a loaf—it is easy for Thee—here are stones in plenty, make them to be loaves and feast on plenty. The reply of the Lord is instructive indeed,—

It is written—

Not by bread alone shall man live,

But by every word (saying) proceeding out of the mouth of God.

The Devil then, in his next essay, also quotes that which is written. The omission by him of the words,

" To keep Thee in all Thy ways "

has been noted as though it were a Satanic device to deceive by misquotation. In the light of the freedom with which betimes the Lord and His Apostles quote the Old Testament this seems to us without justification. Especially as we gather from Luke that he quoted as from two portions (see in R.V. how the quotation of Psalm **91.** 11 in Luke **4.** 10 is disjoined from that of Psalm **91.** 12 in Luke **4.** 11 by the word " and ").

The Lord makes no comment on any misquotation.

" Again it is written," said He—

" ' Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' "

The Lord may tempt us as He tempted Abraham; not indeed to evil, James **1.** 13 makes that plain; but He tempts us with what is good, as a nurse will tempt a patient with nourishing delicacies. But to tempt the Lord is forbidden absolutely. In the path of duty He will care

for His own. To step out of that path is to tempt the Lord (see Psalm **95.** and its quotation in Hebrews **3.**).

The third temptation, which Luke puts second, was to accept from Satan's hands the authority and glory of the kingdoms of the earth without suffering or woe, simply by owning allegiance to him. This, I suppose, was the greatest temptation that Satan could offer. It failed, as did the others, ignominiously. For the Prince of this world when he came found nothing in Him—nothing within to respond to the temptation without.

So Hebrews **4.** 15 is correctly rendered:—"In all points tempted like as we are, apart from sin"; not "yet without sin." He was not tempted on all points as we are, for in Him there was no sin (1 John **3.** 5)—nothing to respond to temptation without.

He was as the near kinsman. Howbeit there were kinsmen nearer than He. But the nearer kinsman could not redeem. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother."

We conclude by a continuation of our enumeration of quotations.

QUOTATION 6 from Isaiah **40.** 3.
,, 7 from Deuteronomy **8.** 3.
,, 8 from Psalm **91.** 11.
,, 9 from Deuteronomy **6.** 16.
,, 10 from Deuteronomy **6.** 13 and **10.** 20.

CHAPTER VII.

John 1.

As to order of time the Apostle John in this gospel goes back further than any other writer. Genesis 1. 1 takes us back to the first creation of the first heavens and the first earth. At such a beginning time there began to be the first created of all created beings that had a beginning. But in the beginning the Word was; that is, when that came into being which was the first to be created, the Word was, the Word was with God, the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God and by Him all things were made or became. Note the use of the true word "was" here, and distinguish it from the word "became," that is was made or came to be. The A.V. reads—"There was a man sent from God" (verse 6); this is wrong. There became such a man; he came to be, he was made. But as to the Word He was God, but He became flesh (verse 14).

The Unique Character of the Gospel by John.

John thus tells us nothing of the immaculate conception, of the human parentage, nothing of the boyhood or youth. The subject of the book is the One sent from God, as again and again and again we are told. He was in the world that He had made and it knew Him not; He came unto His own things and His own folks received Him not.

Note in verse 14 the first use by the writer of the personal pronoun. Those of verses 12, 13 include the beloved disciple who says, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us full of grace and truth." Compare 1 John 1. 1.

Now we get a mention of John the Forerunner; his first testimony is here recorded in verses 15 to 18.

It may be worth while noticing that John as well as Matthew, Mark, Luke, records the testimony of John the Baptist.

Passing on to the passage verses 29 to 34, we see clearly that this must be subsequent to the temptation of the Lord which was the subject of Matthew **4.** 1-11, Mark **1.** 12, 13, and Luke **4.** 1-13, but it and much else is prior to John's incarceration (Matthew **4.** 12, Mark **1.** 14, Luke **3.** 20. Then as verses 29, 35, 43 each begins " On the morrow," it follows that the whole passage (John **1.** 19 to 51) is comprised in the course of a few days. The fact that John **2.** records the Lord's beginning of signs shows us moreover that it is here we may find Him at the very commencement of His public ministry.

The commencement of the Lord's work then consists in a private conversation with two disciples of John the Baptist, who as a result thereof spend a day or two with Him, and as we know from other scriptures soon go back to their fishing. One of these was Andrew, who finds Simon his brother; the other was likely enough John himself, who perhaps fetched his brother James. Two more are found the next day, Philip and Nathaniel. The latter is probably the one called in the other gospels Bartholomew. And so there were perhaps half a dozen disciples with the Lord when He went down to Cana of Galilee. Why they ever went away again we may well marvel. We may also marvel why after the Lord has had us with him for a precious and fruitful time He has again to come and find us occupied with everything else and again say, " Follow Me."

CHAPTER VIII.

John 1. 29—2. 12.

At the Marriage in Cana of Galilee. The Lord's First Sign.

In Galilee behold Him
A simple wedding-guest,
But mighty powers enfold Him,
Believing ones are blest.

If we rightly understand John 2. 11 to state that the Lord Jesus did His first sign in Cana of Galilee at this marriage feast, it may fairly be considered that this passage of Scripture presents to us the opening scenes of the Lord's ministry. Ushered in on Jordan's banks by the one who had a month or so previously immersed Him in its waters, the first few days of His work is here described by one who unquestionably had a share in its soul-stirring events.

The period of time comprised in this passage of Scripture is certainly very short, but for a knowledge of its exact length we require, first, to ascertain positively whether the morrows of verses 29, 35, 43 of chapter 1. are all separate days following one another in uninterrupted succession, as appears to be the case, and secondly to understand whether the third day when the marriage was held was the third counting from what we may call Philip's day (*v.* 43), or from Andrew's day (*vv.* 35, 40). If we were clear on these points we might be able to trace very plainly the Lord's steps in this memorable week in which His public ministry opened, and to be assured if indeed this beginning of signs which He did in Cana of Galilee was done, as the present writer is disposed to believe, on the first day of the week—A bright and happy foretaste of the glad day of His resurrection from among the dead.

It is impossible in few words to say all one would wish on the pregnant story of the marriage at Cana in Galilee. Truly the Lord was no ascetic. He came eating and drinking, though He well knew they would say, "Behold, a

gluttonous man, and a winebibber." It is difficult to speak with patience of those children of God for whom the perfect pattern is not good enough, who abjure as evil what He partook of and here miraculously provided.[1] The Lord was no total abstainer. Of abstinence at times for rightful purpose we say nothing, the Lord Himself practised this. Of the principles inculcated in Romans **14.** and 1 Corinthians **8.** we now do not speak.[1]

Note that the visit to Cana of Galilee was followed by a journey to Capernaum, whither Mary and His brethren and His disciples accompanied Him. What attracted Him here we cannot say; but though He stayed but a few short days at this time, later on He made it His home and so wrought the works of God therein all freely and faithfully and yet without avail, that around the name of this city He hung in later days a tale of woe and judgment that still echoes and re-echoes from Hades beneath as a warning of lost opportunity.

[1]See Appendix II., Page 183.

CHAPTER IX.

John 2. 13—3. 21.

The Cleansing of the House at the First Passover.

The account of the Lord's doings at the temple here recorded bears many points of resemblance to what we read in Matthew **21.** 12-17, Mark **11.** 15-18, and Luke **19.** 45, 46. But whereas the temple purgation recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke clearly took place but a few days before the crucifixion, it seems clear that we have here in John one of the earliest of the Lord's public acts. To quote a definite scripture that seems to evidence this we mention John **3.** 24, "John was not yet cast into prison." We understand that in the first four chapters we have events which precede John the Baptist's incarceration. As to the events of chapter **5.** we have no light, but while chapter **6.** is definitely subsequent so we think chapters **1.** to **4.** are manifestly precedent to the imprisonment of the Baptist.

This seems to have been the first passover to which the Lord went after His entry into His public ministry, and at this time He performed signs not a few in Jerusalem, so that many believed in His name. Their trust in Him was one thing and good for them, for it was well founded. Not so would have been confidence on the Lord's part in those who believed in Him, for they were untrained, undisciplined and altogether unfitted. Them He knew and what was in them He knew.

Nicodemus and the Lord Jesus.

"But" as chapter **3.** begins—and indeed chapter **3.** ought to begin at verse 23 of chapter **2** if we are to have division into chapters at all—the word "now" in (**2.** 23 and) **3.** 1 is the ordinary word "but," and Nicodemus will be better understood if we read it so. "When He was in Jerusalem . . . many believed . . . but there was a man of the Pharisees," and so forth. The sense is that Nicodemus is

marked off from the many—He came to Him by night—not in cowardice but for privacy. One would like those who speak of Nicodemus as a coward to show one-tenth part of his courage coupled with one-tenth part of his sense. His words " We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God " go quite as far as the believing of the many, but having that much he wanted more. He wanted more intimate acquaintance with the Person, more real knowledge of the teaching. He wanted it and he got it. He seems, from the questions he asked, to have made some foolish mistakes. But the only man who makes no mistakes is the man who never makes anything, and Nicodemus was not such. He became a child of God and learnt as such. At first the earthly things he found hard to believe, but later he learned them and heavenly things too. At least this too could be said of him, that he did not hate the light but came to it, and subsequent scriptures establish this likewise, that his works became wrought in God. Without commenting on the doctrine the Lord taught him we earnestly direct attention to the blessedness which Nicodemus enjoyed because he came to Him by night. May we do likewise.

CHAPTER X.

John 3. 22-36.

The Lord's sphere of ministry is now rapidly growing, and though but one sign has been done His disciples are becoming numerous. A dispute about some matter of purification gives the Enemy an opportunity of tempting John, the son of Zacharias, suggesting to him feelings of jealousy at the success that attended the Lord's efforts. Perhaps even his own disciple, keen for the repute of his master, was concerned to think that he was being supplanted by Another. But John knew well his relationship as a mere man, though sent indeed from God, to the One who came from above and is above all. As friend of the bridegroom his joy was not in himself nor yet in the success of his own labour, but all and only in the Bridegroom's voice.

Testimonies of the Baptist to the Lord Jesus.

This passage, from verse 22 to verse 36 of chapter **3.** is thus occupied with testimony from John the son of Zacharias. Whilst Luke tells us much more of John's history, we have here in the gospel according to the son of Zebedee, no less than six separate testimonies of the Baptist to the Lord Jesus Christ. They are as follows—

1. John **1.** 15. John beareth witness of Him " * * this was He * * "
2. John **1.** 19-28. And this is the witness of John " * * * * in the midst of you standeth One * "
3. John **1.** 29-31. He seeth Jesus * * and saith, " Behold, the Lamb of God which beareth the sin of the world! This is He * * "
4. John **1.** 32-34. John bare witness saying, " I have beheld the Spirit * * * It abode upon Him * * I have seen and have borne witness * * "
5. John **1.** 35. Again on the morrow John * * looked * * and saith, " Behold * * "
6. John **8.** 27-36. John answered * * * *

This sixth is, in a sense, a conclusion of John's testimony; for he now refers to the Son of God as a greater witness. Coming down from heaven, He bears witness of what He has seen in heaven, even the face of His Eternal Father; bears witness too of what He has heard, even the voice of that Omnipotent One, Whose name is Love and Light. To receive John's witness would lead a man to the Lord Jesus Christ, but to receive the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ is to know the God of Truth. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," were His words to Philip later on.

It is sometimes said or thought (in view, for example, of Acts **19.** 1-7) that John the Baptist had but little light. But what could be plainer, more illuminating than these words of his, "The Father loveth the Son"? Where can be found more pregnant and far-reaching words than these? What a true ring there is in the gospel message of verse 36, with its dread antithesis!

The Son of God being all and in all to the Father, it is proclaimed that to believe on (literally, into) Him is to have life eternal.—This is not a promise nor a hope—It is a declared fact. But mark that the faith must be in the Person, and this is only possible to those who have been graciously privileged to hear His word and voice, as His own later words show. So of the solemn testimony that the wrath of God abides on unbelievers, let it be well noted that these are not such as have never heard of the Lord Jesus, but such as having heard refuse to be persuaded, and disobey. In goodness of God there are myriads who now possess life eternal, some being still in the body,and some with the Lord; and, alas! there are myriads in this world on whom the wrath of God abides as unbelievers and disobedient ones, and of the many who have thus left this world of opportunity it is true that they shall not see life. But there are also countless myriads who are outside the scope of this scripture altogether. There are the infant dead, who will certainly be saved; there are the heathen, and others who have never heard of the Son of God, and of those we can neither say that they now have life eternal nor that they will not see life. As to such, other scriptures speak plainly, if not in great detail, and good is the word of one of old, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

CHAPTER XI.

John 4. 1-42.

We have so far traced the footsteps of the sent One from Jordan's banks into Galilee, to Cana of Galilee, down to Capernaum; then up to Jerusalem for the first passover after His public ministry commenced, and thence into Judæa. Now again going into Galilee He must needs go through Samaria.

Conversation with the Woman at the Well.

The occasion of His departure from Judæa was that the Pharisees had heard how numerous were the disciples He made and baptized. But why must He go through Samaria? Not to make many disciples, not to do what seemed a great work, nor to meet a great man; but because He was hungry—not indeed for the meat which perisheth, but to do the will of Him who sent Him—and He willeth that all men should be saved, and that not even a poor Samaritan adulteress[1] should perish.

It is indeed noteworthy that the gospel which most emphasizes the dignity and greatness of the Christ is the one which gives the longest accounts of His doings with individuals, and especially such lowly persons as this woman of Samaria, and the man born blind.

Whilst we shall say little as to the doctrine of the Lord in this passage there are a few points to which we must direct attention.

The conversation commences by the Creator of all things seeking to put Himself under an obligation to the poor woman whom He wished to help, "give me to drink."

Then He seeks to give her a sense of her ignorance "If thou knewest." She knew a great deal of the customs of Jews with Samaritans, but she knew nothing of Him who spoke to her.

We are too apt to think of the expression "living water" as primarily denoting something spiritual. The idea I think is running water—water which is always flowing, not stagnant, but fresh and limpid. She understood the Lord

[1] See verses 17, 18.

so, for it will be seen by R.V. margin of verse 6 that it was a spring by which the wearied Lord sat.

"* * and Jacob's spring was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus by the spring."

Yet though a spring it did not rise to the surface as some springs do; it was a long way down to the water level. Why was this? Because the water came from no great height.

* * The woman saith unto Him, "Lord, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well (*not* spring) is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well?"

Observe that the Lord keeps up her interest; He does not say at once that He referred to that which was not literal water at all, but He speaks in praise of that of which He Himself had such keen enjoyment—water that comes from such a height that it springs up in the one who drinks it, and springs up into Eternal life.

"* * the water that I shall give him shall become in him a spring of water, springing up unto eternal life."

Thus far as to the good things He could give. But when she would fain have the water, whatever mysterious thing it was she knew not, then it needed that He should plumb the depths of her wicked heart, and work in her conviction of sin.

It is very unlike the ways of modern preachers of the gospel in general, that having thus plainly spoken to her of her sinfulness He should allow and even encourage the conversation to be turned to the subject of worship. Here, to this poor woman of all the persons He ever spoke to, He tells so plainly what is the desire of the Father's heart, even worship in spirit and in truth.

"* * The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The Lord was simply passing through Samaria. He asked for a drink of water, but He allowed Himself to be detained for two days, and not a few of the inhabitants of that city now at rest in His arms can look back and mark those days as the beginning of days to them.

CHAPTER XII.

John 4. 43-54.

The tarrying in the City of the Samaritans lasted two days, and afterwards the Lord went into Galilee. We are invited to connect the reception of the Lord by the Galileans with His doings in Jerusalem at the Feast. Now we are not told of any sign of healing or the like done by Him then and there, and we must therefore regard His purification of the temple as that to which this scripture chiefly refers. This confirms us in the belief that John 2. 13-22 really does refer to an early period in the Lord's ministry, and is not to be confounded with the purification He effected in the temple just before His death.

The Lord Jesus Cures the Nobleman's Son.

He comes down therefore to Cana of Galilee, where, as we understand, He had performed His first sign, and here He restores to health the sick son of the Capernaum nobleman. This personage was probably, as the R.V. margin gives, a king's officer—the word itself literally means royal, kingly, belonging to a king, and it is used in this adjective sense in Acts 12. 20, 21, and in James 2. 8, where we read of a royal country, royal apparel, royal law. Used as a substantive (of persons) it may mean, according to Liddell and Scott, either the king's friends or his officers.

Note the faith of the nobleman and his affection for his son (perhaps his only son), "Lord come down ere my little boy die." When he met the Lord it was about one o'clock, a time when in the hot East many are taking an afternoon siesta (as Christians nowadays often do after a Sunday dinner). But at this time the nobleman received the words in which power was, "Thy son liveth," and off he went. Meeting his servants on the morrow he was greeted by the news that his son had successfully passed the dread crisis of his disease, and he inquires at what hour the marvellous remedy of the great Physician began its effect, "when he

began to amend." But the servants in mentioning the very hour at which the Lord had spoken speak of no commencement of a cure. "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." It was no case of a great physician merely administering some potent remedy which after time and patience wrought a cure. He,

> Whose almighty word Chaos and Darkness heard,
> And took their flight,

spake the word and forthwith the disease vanished, and himself and his whole house believed.

We now reach a point when it is rather difficult to discern the order of the Gospel narratives. Up to this point everything has been fairly plain, namely, first those incidents which precede the Lord's commencement of His public ministry, and secondly, these early narratives that centre round the first passover after His baptism.

When we come to the sixth chapter of John we get an account of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, the one sign which is recorded in all four Gospels. This may serve, therefore, as an epoch by which the Lord's ministry is divided into an earlier and a later period. The wording of John **5.** 1 and John **6.** 1 shows clearly the order of these events, namely, that the healing of the Bethesda sick man followed the healing of the nobleman's son, and was followed in its turn by the feeding of the five thousand.

But a vast number of important incidents are recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke as having followed the incarceration of John the Baptist, and therefore as being subsequent to the events of John **1. 2. 3. 4.**, and as having taken place before the epoch of John **6.** which finds its parallel passages in Matthew **14.**, Mark **6.**, Luke **9.** And as far as is known to the present writer there is no hint either in John **5.** or in Matthew, Mark, Luke to indicate where the healing of the Bethesda sick man would come into the narrative of either of these three Gospels.[1]

We shall therefore first study John **5.** by itself in the setting in which we find it; and subsequently return to the other Gospels before we read the account which Jesus gives of the multiplication of the loaves.

[1]See Appendix I., Page 178.

CHAPTER XIII.

John 5.

In looking at a distant prospect from any particular point of view which is sufficiently elevated, the eye is naturally attracted by those hills or mountains which stand up prominently above the surrounding country; and neglecting for the time the details of the low-lying land between, one perhaps is led unconsciously to suppose that these upstanding eminences have an importance in the configuration of the country which is all their own; and that proportionally to their height there lies below a breadth and a depth of foundation structure.

So in the passage before us, where is recorded one sign out of the many that certainly were done between the healing of the nobleman's son and the feeding of the five thousand. But these four signs recorded respectively in John **2. 4. 5. 6.** tower high in our sight, and especially the latter two, which give rise to teaching of such far-reaching importance as we get for instance in John **5.** 19, 20, and **6.** 37. As to the details of other deeds and words in this period we must wait till we turn back to Matthew, Mark, Luke. Here and now John **5.** may be enough for us.

The Healing of the Man at the Pool of Bethesda.

The words omitted from the text of the Revised Version and stated in the margin thereof to be inserted wholly or in part in many ancient authorities, probably originated in an attempt to explain the text. The genuine words of verse 7 mention a troubling of the pool, and indicate the anxiety of the sick to be the first to step in after the troubling. It is supposed that two, or perhaps three, separate notes explanatory of this were first placed in the margins of various manuscripts and then were incorporated in the text by those who copied the manuscripts (see *Printed Text of the Greek New Testament*, by S. P. Tregelles, pages 243-246). The facts may have been as stated or they

may not; it is no matter. All we need is the text. The poor fellow could not help himself, had no one to help him and had not even the sense to ask for healing. The Lord healed him straightway of His own grace and goodness.

But it was the Sabbath, and grievously had the man offended the Jews by carrying his bed on the Sabbath, though they cared nothing how long he lay in his bed on the Sabbath.

(It is remarkable how the word Jews is used in the New Testament—perhaps some of our readers would hunt up which are the books in which the people of Israel are so called.)

We read elsewhere in this connexion of One who is greater than the Sabbath, but here this theme is elaborated, and the Lord speaks in no uncertain words as to His person and His work.

This commences with the memorable words, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." Here in unmistakable language He declares Himself to be the Son of God. But some would say that this is so just as it might be of any man as God's creature—

"We are also His offspring,"

but very especially of any distinguished for goodness and the like, as He was. The question then is, Was that all He meant? First, how was He understood? They sought to kill Him because He called God His own Father (note the words His own Father, and further), making Himself equal with God. Well, then, was this a mistake of theirs? Did they misunderstand Him in supposing that He meant to say He was equal with God? Note His following words, and observe how absolutely He links Himself with the Father in the next and following verses. What things the Father doeth the Son doeth in like manner. All are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father.

Along with all this and dependent thereon, joined therewith indissolubly, we have the words as to the quickening power of the Son's voice and the insight into futurity with which the paragraph ends (verse 29).

Here, too, with this declaration of the equality of Father and Son we have the clearest teaching as to their identity of

purpose and of action. The Father quickeneth, so the Son quickeneth, but the Father judgeth no one, having given all judgment to the Son.

And yet we have here no mere enunciation of a formal doctrine, but all set forth in definite statements, showing as far as it is possible for man to understand it, the relation between these two ineffable Persons who are divinely named as the Father and the Son. Words which we comment on with hesitation, but without hesitation commend to all readers as worthy of perusal and re-perusal again and again and worthy of committing to memory with the utmost assiduity. By making them one's very own they may serve as a true prophylactic against the epidemic of modern scepticism under its lying name of higher criticism.

But as it was then, so, alas! it is to-day. Then men professed to believe Moses, but believed not the Greater than Moses of whom Moses spake. So to-day, men who take the name of Christ and profess to reverence His word, count it of no more value than a myth or a folk-story, because they have not the love of God in themselves.

CHAPTER XIV.

MATTHEW **4.** 12-22; MARK **1.** 14-20; LUKE **4.** 16—**5.** 11.

THE passages from Matthew and Mark commence:

"Now when He heard that John was delivered up, He withdrew into Galilee."

"Now after that John was delivered up Jesus came into Galilee."

These words demand our very earnest attention.

First, by comparing them with what we have read in John, we may mark an important subdivision of the period of the Lord's ministry. For whilst chapters **1.** to **5.** of John agree with chapters **1.** to **5.** of Mark and **3.** to **13.** of Matthew in belonging to that period of the Life which preceded the feeding of the five thousand, yet at any rate the first four chapters of John deal with the time when John the Baptizer was at liberty, whilst from Matthew **4.** 12 and from Mark **1.** 14 onwards we have that ministry of the Lord Jesus which followed the betrayal and incarceration of John the Baptizer.

Thus, at least for convenience and help to the memory, we first divide the Life into two periods; one being before, and the other following after, the sign of the feeding of the five thousand, whilst the earlier of these periods is subdivided into two, the former being that during which the forerunner of the Lord was at liberty, and the latter that of his imprisonment.

The verses before us clearly show that the delivering up of John the Baptist had an important effect on the course of the Lord's action.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD TRANSLATED "DELIVERED UP."

At this stage it might be well to look rather closely at the significance of the word translated "delivered up." This word παραδίδωμι paradidōmi, is from παρά para, beside, near; and δίδωμι didōmi, I give. Its root meaning is very simple, namely to place with, to put into the charge of, to deliver unto.

Its usage corresponds with that of the English word "deliver," in the sense in which a letter is delivered unto a messenger or delivered by a postman, not of course at all in the sense in which we speak of delivering from prison or from trouble. But the word has the most varied usage in its occurrences in over one hundred passages in the New Testament. Its general meaning may be illustrated by such scriptures as "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father" (Matthew **11,** 27); "The Faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3); "He bowed His head and gave (delivered) up His Spirit" (John **19.** 30).

The word comes to have a special meaning in connexion with prisoners; for which firstly compare Matthew **5.** 25, "lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison," with Luke **12.** 58, "lest haply he hale thee" (a different word, "drag thee" or "drag thee away" according to the American Revisers) "unto the judge, and the judge shall deliver thee to the officer, and the officer shall cast thee into prison." See also for example Matthew **10.** 16-23, where the word is uniformly translated "deliver up."

It will be perhaps most helpful to note the various "deliverings up" of the Lord Himself.

Judas delivered up the Son of Man with a kiss (Luke **22.** 48).

The chief priests and the elders of the people delivered Him up to Pilate the Governor (Matthew **27.** 1, 2).

Pilate delivered Jesus up that He might be crucified (Mark **15.** 15).

Jesus our Lord . . . was delivered up for our trespasses . . . He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all (Romans **4.** 25; **8.** 32).

The Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me (Galatians **2.** 20).

Christ also loved you and delivered Himself up for us (Ephesians **5.** 2).

Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for her (Ephesians **5.** 25).

It does not seem as if the word itself carried any of that hateful meaning that belongs to our word "betray." The Authorised Version, however, uses this word as a translation of παραδίδωμι, paradidōmi, but only in reference to Judas, and in this the Revised Version follows them, but with manifest hesitation; see the marginal note of Matthew **10.** 4).

(The word translated betrayers in Acts **7.** 52 is different; it occurs also in Luke **6.** 16 and 2 Timothy **3.** 4, where it is translated traitor.)

It seems to us that whatever odium there may be lies in the circumstances of the act. There is of course nothing but duty in the act of a judge who delivers a criminal up to punishment. On the other hand when a friend or relative takes advantage of his intimacy to secure the imprisonment even of a guilty person the act may be in general deprecated as a breach of faith and as evincing a lack of natural feeling. But when an innocent man is thus delivered up by his intimates the betrayal well deserves severest reproach.

We are disposed to think that John was so betrayed by Jews into the hands of Herod the King; that they delivered him up, and by Herod's command he was seized and put into prison. Compare Matthew **14.** 3, Mark **6.** 17.

As a result of this betrayal the Lord withdrew into Galilee, as we are told in Matthew. But in Mark it says that He came into Galilee. Let none think that these two words mean the same thing. The meaning of one is exactly opposite to that of the other. The King withdrew, He departed into another place, away from Jerusalem and Judæa; the act described in Matthew is retiring—the King leaves the royal city and the royal country. But the Servant pursues His work; He passes from one scene to another; He comes into Galilee heralding the gospel. Let it then be well noted that we have here a manifest diversity in these two gospels, both being absolutely true and truthful, and yet describing the same fact in words of quite different, yea, of contrary meaning.

The Call of the Fishermen.

We are next told in Matthew and Mark of the call of Simon and Andrew and James and John. Being fishers,

Simon and Andrew were fishing; for John the Baptist, whose disciples they had been, was cast into prison, and they had perhaps forgotten, or almost forgotten, the Lamb of God with whom they had at one time abode a while. Calling them to come after Him, He promises to teach them a more profitable occupation and they follow Him, as James and John do in like manner.

But what about Luke's story? How different it appears, how hard to reconcile! We need not be overmuch concerned, however, to piece these accounts together. It would be interesting to know if the fishermen that Luke says had gone out were Simon and Andrew, or their hired servants, as this might help us to understand the sequence of events. But if we just read the separate passages each for itself, we shall be well fed, and may by receiving the engrafted word with meekness obtain the salvation of our souls.

From Luke we learn that the night's fishing had been unsuccessful; but the Lord, though by trade a carpenter, could bring help to the fishermen. And such a catch they had likely never caught before. The power of the Lord was brought into the circumstances of their daily life. As fishermen they learnt to know Him by the Lake of Gennesaret as they had not known Him in Bethany beyond Jordan.

It is profitable and interesting indeed to contemplate this draught of fishes which followed the discourse which verse 3 mentions. What did the Lord teach from out this fishing boat? We are not told; but we are told of what He did; of the fish that came at His bidding and the promise to Simon that not fish henceforth he should catch, but men he should take alive.

CHAPTER XV.

Matthew 5., 6., 7.

Speaking generally it would appear that Matthew **4.** 12 to **13.** 58, Mark **1.** 14 to **6.** 13, Luke **5.** 1 to **9.** 6 contain the narrative of events that occurred during the imprisonment of John the Baptist; that is between his betrayal and his murder.

Order of Events in the Narratives.

These are arranged in very different order in the three gospels, and the present writer has been up to the present so unsuccessful in his attempts to determine their chronological sequence that he is beginning to think that perhaps this is purposely veiled from discovery.

At any rate we shall be able to see clearly that it is a mistake to suppose that the order in which the principal incidents of this period occurred is strictly adhered to in any one of the gospels.

Firstly, suppose we inquire whether Matthew follows the historical order strictly. See Matthew **8.** 18: "Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side."

Then follows the storm that was miraculously quelled. From Mark **4.** 35 we know that this crossing of the water was on the same day as that on which He had spoken the parable of the mustard seed recorded in Matthew **13.**

Thus Matthew does not always follow the order in which the events took place.

The cure of the man sick of the palsy borne of four seems according to Matthew **9.** 1,2, to follow immediately, or almost immediately, after the Lord's return from the country of the Gadarenes, where He had healed two demoniacs—this sign according to all three gospels being subsequent to the stilling of the storm.

The healing of the demoniacs (one only is named in Mark and Luke) is recorded in Matthew **8.** 28-34, Mark **5.** 1-20, Luke **8.** 26-39, whilst the cure of the palsied man is recorded in Mark **2.** 1-12, Luke **5.** 17-26; that is before the healing of the demoniac.

Thus Mark and Luke do not follow in this case the order in which the events occurred. Other illustrations might be given, but these may suffice. It is necessary to say, however, that, generally speaking, Mark appears to adhere closest to the historical order, whilst Matthew, and in a greater degree Luke, are guided in their arrangement by other considerations.

In these remarks we especially refer to the period of John's imprisonment. In the later period of the Life which follows the Great Desert Meal there is much more evidence of the order in which the incidents succeeded one another, and more uniformity in the arrangement of the different gospels.

We shall not at present say much therefore of the order of events, but simply offer comments on the scriptures in passing.

On the Mountain Teaching.

The words spoken by the Lord on the mountain have been very much neglected by those whom we may name ultra-protestant Christians. A sad production of recent years has been a Marked Testament, passages of the Scriptures telling of justification by faith and the like being distinguished by a red line, and the many precious and priceless words of the Lord speaking of righteousness and holiness and so forth being left unmarked as if of inferior value.[1]

We need hardly say of course that our objection does not apply to the general practice of students of Scripture in marking their own Bibles as they may believe helpful to themselves in the way of assistance to the memory and the like. But when we find a definite plan of marking a certain class of passages, which by implication suggests the inferiority or minor importance of other scriptures equally God breathed and profitable, yea, necessary, words are not strong enough to express what we would fain say.

[1]See Appendix III., Page 184.

The subject of the Lord's discourse seems to be briefly outlined in the words, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." Perhaps this word translated "fulfil" here is used in the sense of "to complete," "to make perfect," as in some other places, rather than in the sense of "to accomplish," or both meanings may be implied.

Of course there is much in this discourse which is specifically related to the law and to those to whom the law had been given. But it may be worth while to examine in some little detail how far this discourse is of general application, or whether it really is only applicable to Israel and to be regarded as now superseded and obsolete as some, we fear believe. Compare, too, Luke **6.** 20-49.

First come the benedictions for
the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek,
they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,
the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers,
they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Which of these are not now blessed? That poverty of spirit and purity of heart are rare; that mourners and peacemakers are few; that the meek and the merciful may often be sought in vain; and that hunger and thirst for righteousness are almost as scarce as is persecution for the same—these facts are patent to all. Nevertheless, though heaven and earth pass away, His words abide; the kingdom of heaven and the sight of God for the poor and the pure; comfort for mourners and a good name for peacemakers; and all other good things here promised. In Him is the Yea.

It is well to peruse with attention, too, the Lord's words as to murder and anger, adultery and lust, perjury and vain oaths, vengeance and generosity, love and hatred; lest these words being neglected we become barren and unfruitful, instead of perfect as our heavenly Father is.

The warnings against hypocrisy seem also to be of very present value. The practice of trumpet blowing is not extinct yet.

Note also particularly as of very general application the soul-stirring prayer:—

Our Father Who art in the heavens,
Hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done as in Heaven so on Earth;
Our bread for the coming day give us this day,
And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors,
And bring us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the Evil One.

A prayer for to-day in very truth; every petition so aptly fitting our needs and what should be our aspirations.

Passing on to the bird and lily verses, how much they are needed to-day! How hopelessly little is our faith in God for food and raiment! What hours of anxiety and worry we spend, most certainly seeming to think that God either cares nothing for us or is quite unable to supply our need!

Really a country walk might do some of us town-bred Christians good; to see that God really does make the grass to grow in the country He has made; though in the man-made town there is such a weary desert of bricks and mortar. But even in the towns we can see sparrows, unless we shut our eyes, and our heavenly Father feeds them though they neither sow nor gather into barns. But I think sometimes rather than take comfort from this, we are almost willing to reckon ourselves as worth less than half a farthing in God's sight, though so valuable in our own.

But it is no good being anxious, and it certainly is much harm. Why can we not mind our own business? Our business is to seek His kingdom and His righteousness.

Then passing on to the end let us note the words: "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens" (literal reading).

Then comes the parable of two houses, and woe, woe is us if we reject the warning and exhortation that these words contain. Who will be wise, let him observe and consider.

Finally note that the Lord Jesus Christ was not as the scribes had been from Ezra onwards, a mere expositor of Holy Scripture. He spake with authority; what He said we know to be true and valid, not because it commends itself to our judgment, but because it is His word.

CHAPTER XVI.

Matthew 8. 1-18.

The account given in Matthew **5., 6., 7.** of our Lord's words on the Mountain is followed immediately by a record of His deeds, and firstly by an account of three signs of healing performed on—

A leper,
A centurion's servant,
Peter's mother-in-law.

Through this dark vale of sorrow
He, clothed with pity, went.
In Him each sick and sad one
Found power and mercy blent.

Different Acts of Healing.

It is instructive to compare the different acts of healing done by the Lord Jesus as illustrative of His ways in salvation work. For there is not that studied uniformity of method that might be supposed if we were to judge by the traditional presentation of the Gospel of God's grace in the present day.

The leper comes and worships Him, saying, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst." Not so with the centurion's servant, for it is the centurion who comes, and his faith is exercised on behalf of another; whilst in the case of Peter's mother-in-law the act is here presented as originating entirely in the grace and goodness in the Lord's heart.

The faith of the leper in the Lord's power receives its reward, and his hesitation as to the Lord's willingness is presently removed. Compare and contrast the account given by Mark of the possessed child. "If Thou canst do anything," said the father. "If Thou canst!" said the Lord, "all things are possible to him that believeth."

The faith of the centurion is noteworthy. He knew the source of his own ability to control his subordinates, namely, that he was under authority himself. Applying this principle which he knew in temporal things to that which pertains to the unseen, he obtained an insight into the secret of the Lord's ability. "I also," said he, "am a man under authority." Concerning this the Lord said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

We may note that Peter's mother-in-law, whose restoration, as we have said, is not connected in the narrative with any act of faith, but was a spontaneous act of grace, was the one of the three who at once commenced to minister to Him who had shown her His goodness.

Thereafter we have the expulsion of many demons and the cure of many sick folk. This was in fulfilment of a prophecy of Isaiah which is here quoted (Matthew **8.** 17). In previous chapters we enumerated ten Old Testament quotations contained in this Gospel.

QUOTATION 11, in Matthew **4.** 15, 16 is from Isaiah **9.** 1,2.

QUOTATIONS 12 to 17 are contained in the Lord's discourse on the Mount. These six are taken from the law, from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. So that the present, as we count, is QUOTATION 18, from Isaiah **53.** 4.

CHAPTER XVII.

Matthew **8.** 18—**9.** 34.

Multitudes being gathered round the Lord Jesus, He now puts them to a test by giving commandment to cross the lake. One of them, a scribe, proposing to follow Him, He says "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, (Revised Margin, lodging places), but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." The Lord seems to have had a dwelling-place in Capernaum, but whether this had ceased to be His or whether He was referring to the place to which He was going only, does not seem quite certain. Anyhow He made it clear that in following Him the scribe must expect hardships and trials, and had better be prepared for such. Another disciple was not ready to go, for he had home ties. "Follow me," said the Lord, "and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

So then He entered a boat and His disciples followed Him, not knowing where they were going or what would befall them, and having but poor ideas of who He was.

The Storm on the Lake.

And then comes the storm, and they are frightened while He sleeps. He wakes to work, and works however weary He may be. But in what seems a time of danger He sleeps; according as it is written, "He giveth His Beloved sleep." He is perfectly safe, and never for Himself needed to rebuke the winds and waves; for He dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and abode under the shadow of the Almighty (see the whole of the **91**st Psalm). But for their sakes He arose and bade the winds and sea be calm and the men marvelled.

On the other side He meets two demoniacs; that is, men in whom there dwelt demons, evils spirits who had possession of the men and made them act as they willed. The words they spoke, it will be noted, are words of the demons, not of the men. Many details are not given here, but there were

demons enough to enter into a whole herd of swine and cause their destruction. And the loss of the swine was a serious thing; much more mischief was done by the demons in drowning the swine than they had ever done when they indwelt the two poor men. This at least was the public opinion, and they besought the powerful Stranger, who had allowed His kindness to a couple of demoniacs to injure their property, to depart from their borders and do His signs elsewhere. Alas for them in the day of remembrance! For He complied with their request; He crossed over and returned to Capernaum.

To Him thus returned a palsied man is brought who could not of himself come. But faith, of which we read nothing as to Peter's mother-in-law, or the two demoniacs —faith which made the leper pray for himself, and the centurion for his boy—faith was here shown by no less than five persons, namely, the sick man and his bearers.

The Lord here first deals with the greater need and grants the man who was a child (see margin) the forgiveness of sins. For this He had and has authority to grant. But the forgiveness of sins is not a thing to be seen, and His words were regarded as blasphemy by scribes who were present. The cure of the paralysis was an evident thing, and therefore it seemed a harder thing to say, "Arise, and walk." But this was said and done, and the scribes were silenced and the multitudes astonished. Let us well note it; men cannot see that our sins are forgiven; we know it because He has said it. But they can see us walk before them, and from this know what God has wrought.

Matthew Called and Entertains the Lord.

Passing by from thence Matthew is seen sitting at the place of toll, and being called he entertains the Lord and a great company (see other Gospels, for Matthew himself makes little or nothing of the fact).

There seem to have been—besides the Heavenly Guest and His host, Matthew, called also Levi—four classes of persons present. First in their own importance were the Pharisees, who reckoned themselves righteous and despised

others. But the Lord being a teacher and having disciples they expected that some little care would be taken to avoid contact with those whom they regarded as the offscouring of the earth. But they were scandalized to see that the Lord allowed publicans, that is tax collectors; and sinners, that is notorious sinners, to eat with Himself and His disciples. Why? Because He was a physician, and therefore it was right that sick persons should come to Him. He came not to call the righteous; the Pharisees, whilst they so thought themselves, might go; He came to call sinners; and glad was He when they came. And well did Matthew serve his Lord by feasting them at his table.

We note further in this passage the inquiry of John's disciples as to fasting and the healing of the sleeping daughter of Jairus and of the woman with an issue, to which we hope to refer more particularly in connexion with its mention in the other Gospels.

We specially observe also the sight given to two blind men, and the cure of a dumb demoniac, making altogether nine signs of healing particularly described in chapters **8.** and **9.** of Matthew; namely, leper, centurion's boy, Peter's mother-in-law, two demoniacs, palsied man, ruler's daughter, woman with issue, two blind men, dumb demoniac.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Matthew **9.** 35—**11.** 1.

Immediately after the account in Matthew **9.** 32-34 of the ninth sign of healing recorded in this gospel, we are told that the Lord Jesus went about all the cities and the villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching (that is, heralding) the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

The Lord's Work in a Wider Area.

Eight of the nine miracles to which we refer appear to have been performed within a very small area on the north side of the Sea of Galilee, but the Lord's work now seems to broaden in its range, and He is found surveying a wider field. His words in Matthew **9.** 37, 38, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He may send forth labourers into His harvest," may be compared with the much earlier words of John **4.** 35-38, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest. He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathered fruit unto life eternal; that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For herein is the saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not laboured, others have laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

And now He calls the twelve unto Him and sends them forth with authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

There is something very interesting about the enumeration of the names of the apostles in the different Gospels and in Acts.

Matthew 10.	Mark 3.	Luke 6.	Acts 1.
Simon . . Peter	Simon . . Peter	Simon . . Peter	Peter
and Andrew . . .	James the s. of Z.	and Andrew his b.	and John
James the s. of Z.	and John the b. of J.	and James	and James
and John his b.	and Andrew	and John	and Andrew
Philip and	and Philip	and Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	and Bartholomew	and Bartholomew	and Thomas
Thomas and	and Matthew	and Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew the p.	and Thomas	and Thomas	and Matthew
James the s. of A.	and James the s. of A.	and James the s. of A.	James . . of A.
and Thaddæus	and Thaddæus	and Simon . . the Z.	Simon the Z.
Simon the Zealot	and Simon the Z.	and Judas . . . of J.	and Judas of J.
and Judas Iscar.	and Judas Iscariot	and Judas Iscariot	

Peter is always named first, and then follow the other three who had been his partners in fishing days, but in different order, namely Andrew, James and John in Matthew and Luke, but Andrew last in Mark and Acts.

The second four are always given in the Gospels with Philip and Bartholomew first, followed by Thomas and Matthew or Matthew and Thomas, but in Acts Luke puts Thomas before Bartholomew. Bartholomew is almost certainly to be identified with the Nathanael of John 1. Thus the first six apostles are given something in the order in which they came to know the Lord.

James the son of Alphæus heads the last four. Since James the son of Zebedee was slain in comparatively early days, this is doubtless the James of the latter part of Acts and of Galatians. Thaddæus and Judas (not Iscariot) appear to be two names of the same apostle, brother or son of James, with whom he is linked in Matthew and Mark. In Luke and Acts he is put after Simon the Cananæan or Zealot. Why Judas Iscariot is put last is hard to say. It is noticeable that in each enumeration his name is accompanied with the words, "who also delivered Him up," "who became the traitor." Solomon has said—

"The name of the wicked shall rot."

These twelve were sent forth to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to preach, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse lepers, to cast out demons; and much of instruction may be found in the charge given to them, on which we cannot now comment.

It is worthy of note, however, that there is much in the charge given them that seems to have gone far beyond their need for the moment—at least, so we understand.

Moreover, of this much is for His servants at all times, as, for example, the injunction to fear not those who can kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. What can be more fortifying to the Lord's servants than the fear of God? For He alone is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna, and yet counts and preserves the very hairs of His children's heads.

CHAPTER XIX.

Matthew **11.** 2—**12. 8.**

The eleventh chapter of Matthew commences with an account of the enquiry sent by John the Baptist from prison, and of the attendant circumstances; and this is followed by the Lord's upbraiding of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. Then the twelfth chapter records the Sabbath day plucking of the ears of corn as occurring at this season, and the cure of a man with a withered hand, and of a blind and dumb demoniac that immediately followed, with attendant circumstances. "On that day," the thirteenth chapter commences, and goes on to record the kingdom of heaven parables. Now these parables are also recorded in part in Mark **4.** and Luke **8.**, and Mark **4.** 35 says that on that day, when even was come, He said unto them, "Let us go over unto the other side," and then follows the stilling of the storm, and in the fifth chapter (of Mark) the cure of the demoniac beyond the sea, as also recorded in Luke **8.** and in Matthew **8.**

If these occurrences recorded in Matthew **11.**, **12.**, **13.** are therefore to be regarded as closely following one another in the order in which they are set down, it follows that they preceded in order of time that which Matthew **8.** 18 and following passages relate. If this be so, it gives additional importance to the record of the nine signs that we have counted in Matthew **8. 9.** For these, if thus taken out of the order of time and so grouped together, must have special significance in regard to the Matthew presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of Israel.

The Lord's Testimony to John the Baptist.

As in Matthew **4.** 12, His withdrawal into Galilee when He heard of John's betrayal marked a special period in His work (and it almost seemed as if this disaster only more clearly marked out His path); so here the very wavering of John himself is but the occasion for Him to speak highly

of His servant. So that here we have in QUOTATION 19, from Malachi, that which sets John in a position of the greatest pre-eminence amongst those born of women. It is possible certainly to be greater than he, but only by being less. Words of the Apostle of the Gentiles in his letter to Ephesus may here be brought to mind.

How sad and hopeless it is to please men with that which is good! The Spirit who filled John from his mother's womb caused him to abstain from eating and drinking in order that he might carry out the purpose of God entrusted to him, and men say of him, "He hath a demon." The Son of Man who ever did that which pleased the Father, came eating and drinking, and they say, "Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." But wisdom was manifest in both. The forerunner was aloof from all; in solitude on locusts and wild honey he partook of the little that was needful for his body's sustenance. This was needful for him that he might fitly do his life work. As truly was wisdom to be seen in the kindness and condescension of the Almighty One who sat at Matthew's table and ate and drank with the sons of men, in whom His delight was from everlasting from the beginning, or ever the earth was. See **Proverbs 8.**

Then He began to upbraid the cities round about the north coast of the Sea of Galilee, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, wherein most of His mighty works were done.

But at that very season He thanked the Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that these things were hidden from wise and understanding ones and revealed unto babes.

"Come," said He, "unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And at that season as they went through the cornfields the hungry disciples began to eat. It was the Sabbath, and the Pharisees murmured "It is not lawful." But He had promised rest to the heavy laden and He gave it. The Lord of heaven and earth had delivered all things unto Him, so that He was Lord of the Sabbath, and not only permitted the hungry to eat, but showed that in doing so He was but carrying out what had aforetime been done by the man after God's own heart.

CHAPTER XX.

Matthew 12. 9-45.

The Sabbath Day Healing Question.

"And He departed thence and went into their synagogue." As we know from Luke that the healing of the man with a withered hand was on another sabbath, we may be sure that its close connexion in Matthew and Mark with His announcement of Himself as Lord of the sabbath must have a profound moral significance.

He had justified His disciples for satisfying their hunger on the sabbath day, and their hunger was for meat that perisheth. Should not He satisfy His hunger? For His meat was to do His Father's will.

Had the poor self-deluded Pharisees had any conception of the One for whom they laid in wait, they need have been in no doubt. His hunger was too keen, his zeal for God too great to let the poor man go unblessed.

They ask Him, however, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" that they might accuse Him. Yet any of them would have rescued one of his own sheep from a pit! When the Lord asked whether a man was of more value than a sheep they were silenced. But their whole lives were witness that to them a man was of far less value than a sheep. They were covetous, and they in their hearts derided Him who, though He was rich for our sakes, became poor. How good and wise of the Lord to be a poor man and not a rich man!

The Pharisees would now have destroyed Him, but His hour was not yet come, and He withdrew Himself, and healing many He charged them not to make Him known, (Isaiah **21.** 13-15; Psalm **22.** 35), for self-advertisement was no part of His policy according as it was written by Isaiah (chapter **42.**), which we count as Quotation 20.

The Pharisees, however, heard where He was, for when a blind and dumb demoniac was healed they were there ready to scoff and revile.

This leads to the memorable parable of the divided kingdom and the solemn denunciation of those who blaspheme the Spirit of God.

He who had in His boyhood sat in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions, as they sat in Moses' seat and publicly taught the law of God, had in His youth and early manhood never walked in the counsel of the wicked, never had He stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. During the years of youth and of manhood that elapsed ere, being about thirty years of age, He began to teach, His delight was always in Jehovah's law. In His law day and night He meditated. Thus He had been as a tree planted by the stream of water, and now in due season He brings forth His fruit.

What words of power, what withering denunciation, are now the portion of these hoary-headed wicked men!

Alas for those who even yet were neither shamed nor silenced, and sought now from Him a sign from heaven! Hereupon follow first the examples of Jonah and the men of Nineveh, of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba—records of those who in a day of less opportunity showed greater wisdom, in that they repented; and then the intensely solemn forecast of Israel's history, of the evil generation of which the last state is far worse than the first.

We may here note the two further quotations from the Old Testament which occur in the first part of the Gospel according to Matthew.

QUOTATION 21. in Matthew **13.** 14, 15 from Isaiah **6.** 9, 10.

QUOTATION 22. in Matthew **13.** 35 from Psalm **78.** 2.

CHAPTER XXI.

MATTHEW **12.** 46-50 ; MARK **3.** 31-35 ; LUKE **8.** 19-21.

HIS MOTHER AND HIS BRETHREN MISUNDERSTAND HIM.

FOR thirty years the perfect Man had lived His life amongst His kinsfolk, He had spent His days in their company, faithful and faultless in His relationship to them and to their neighbours. How much they had benefited by this we cannot tell very definitely ; but indications are not wanting in the gospels that even His mother understood Him but little. When in the pursuance of His life-work He went forth into His wider field of service, it passed the wits of His friends to know what it all meant, and they said, " He is beside Himself." So they went to lay hold on Him just at the time the Scribes and Pharisees were railing at Him as one whose power was derived from Beelzebub ; His mother too was present, perhaps to remonstrate with Him and warn Him of the danger of incurring the enmity of the Pharisees and Scribes. His friends sent and called Him to come and speak to them. But why, now, did they wish His company? This they had had for many a long year, for He had been brought up and spent His days in their midst. These dwellers in Nazareth might have asked why they of all men should have been so favoured for thirty years, rather than have sought to interfere with Him now He had gone forth to others.

Let us note well His reply. " Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" He first asks ; then, looking round He points to His disciples and says, " Behold, My mother and My brethren." The eternal and sure prophetic word given through Solomon told of His desire for the companionship of the sons of men :—

"Jehovah possessed Me in the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth;
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth.
While as yet He had not made the earth,
Nor the fields
Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.

When He established the heavens, I was there:
When He set a circle upon the face of the deep:
When He made firm the skies above:
When the fountains of the deep became strong:
When He gave to the sea its bound,
That the waters should not transgress His commandment:
When He marked out the foundations of the earth:
Then I was by Him as a Master Workman:
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him;
Rejoicing in His habitable earth;
And My delight was with the sons of men."

—Proverbs **8.** 22-31.

But this human companionship for which He yearned must ever be

BEFORE HIM,

not away from God or in paths that might be displeasing to Him. The two desires, the two causes of rejoicing are inseparably united:

"Rejoicing always before Him;
Rejoicing in His habitable earth;
And My delight was with the sons of men."

Herein is somewhat of that God's wisdom concerning which it has been written:

"Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,
And which entered not into the heart of man,
Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him."

—1 Corinthians **2.** 9.

Let Matthew be taken as one of those that loved Him, that is that loved the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh. Matthew had joy and happiness in His companionship, such as neither eye could see nor ear hear. He knew a brother's love, a brother's friendship as none could know who knew not the Lord of glory.

But as empowered by the Holy Spirit sent from the Father and the Son, Matthew wrote the Gospel bearing

his name, wherein are revealed unto us these very things which entered not into the heart of man, even the things prepared by God for those that love the Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians **2.** 9.).

Ere we pass from this incident, let us note once more in this perfect example the twofold source of His rejoicing and delight. Much is often said, and perhaps too much cannot be said, against the worldliness of God's people, yet the behaviour of a recluse or a hermit is not that which God desires in a child of His, nor that which was manifested by the Son of the Father.

Herein is the keynote of His conduct in this respect. His rejoicing in the habitable earth was ever a rejoicing before God. His delight with the sons of men never for a moment made Him forget that the habitable earth was God's, but rather was a delight in which He knew the Father's presence and His smile.

If children of God in doubt as to this or that of relaxation or of pleasure would but honestly consider whether it may be enjoyed in God's presence, whether His smile would be in any measure lost by going here or there, it would save from much, from very much that is displeasing to Him in the thoughts and words and ways of His people, and would ensure their enjoyment with a good conscience of such simple and unaffected pleasures as the Lord of Glory shared in His youth and in His riper age.[1]

[1]See Appendix I., Page 180.

CHAPTER XXII.

Matthew 13.

This chapter contains an account of certain parables which were spoken by the Lord Jesus in part at the seaside and in part in the house. They have been the subject of much comment and of much interpretation, and of this not a little has been of a kind that darkens counsel by words without knowledge.

We are minded to content ourselves for the present with some consideration of what is actually said, and not to add thereto any attempt at elucidating what is meant.

The chapter may naturally be divided as follows:—

By the Sea Side.

Parable 1.	The sower went forth to sow.	Verses 3 to 9.
,, 2.	A man sowed good seed . . . enemy sowed tares	,, 24 to 30.
,, 3.	A grain of mustard seed which a man took	,, 31, 32.
,, 4.	Leaven, which a woman took	,, 33.

In the House.

	Interpretation of Parable 1	,, 10 to 23.
	,, ,, ,, 2	,, 36 to 43.
,, 5.	Treasure hidden in the field	,, 44.
,, 6.	A man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls ...	,, 45, 46.
,, 7.	A net that was cast into the sea	,, 51 to 53. ,, 47 to 50.
	Conclusion	,, 51 to 53.

Parable 2 tells us to what the Kingdom of the Heavens is likened, and parables 3 to 7 tell us what it is like. The first four parables, spoken to the multitudes, are distinctly called parables. Perhaps the last three should not be called parables in the strict sense. That is to say what was spoken

to the multitude was more or less hidden from them as verses 10 to 15 make plain, but the interpretation was given to the disciples that they might understand, and so these similitudes 5, 6, 7, as we have numbered them, were spoken privately in the house.

There may be some doubt as to the correctness of putting verses 10 to 23 after parable 4. But at any rate it is clear, even from Matthew, and certainly from Mark **4.** 10 that this was spoken privately to the disciples.

If we further compare with Mark **4.** we find first there the parable of the sower and the interpretation thereof, but here the application is to the Kingdom of God rather than to the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Instead of a parable telling of an enemy sowing tares we find in Mark one speaking of the way in which the seed grows, the sower not knowing how. So is the Kingdom of God.

Then comes the parable of a mustard seed, in application to the Kingdom of God.

In Luke **8.** also is given the parable of the sower and its interpretation, and here as in Mark the application is to the Kingdom of God.

This is followed by the parable of the lampstand, as given also by Mark. The way in which these words are given may be carefully noted. That is, because "nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest," "therefore take heed what ye hear" (Mark); also "how ye hear" (Luke), and "for he that hath, to him shall be given" and so forth. These last words occurring also in Matthew **13.** 11, it seems as if this illustration of the lamp was given as part of the private interpretation of the first parable, Matthew **13.** 10-23; Mark **4.** 10-29; Luke **8.** 9-18.

All these eight or nine parables seem to be closely linked together, and there are many instances in them of parallel phrases that deserve attention.

Note how much use is made of seeds: good seed (wheat), tares, mustard seed. These seeds are sown in a field. The field is the world. In the field treasure is hidden. While a man took seed and sowed in his field a woman took leaven and hid in meal.

We are convinced that whilst there is much of what we may call moral teaching lying on the very surface of this chapter, yet for a true grasp of its breadth and general scope the parables of the Kingdom of the Heavens will need to be looked at more closely than they have been hitherto.

The Lord having finished these parables returns to Capernaum, where all His wisdom and all the manifestations of His power are derided, because of His lowly origin. Compare 1 Corinthians **1.** 18—**2.** 5. With this closes Matthew's account of this period of the Lord's life. Before we pass on to the murder of John and that which followed, we will give some time to the parts of the other gospels which are contemporaneous with Matthew **4.** 12—**13.** 58.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARK **4.** 1—**5.** 20; LUKE **7.** 36—**8.** 39.

WOMEN MINISTER UNTO HIM.

THE eighth chapter of Luke tells plainly that on His journeys of love and mercy the Lord was accompanied not only by the twelve apostles, but also by certain women who had been healed and forgiven much and who loved much. There was Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She it was whose tears at His empty grave arrested Him to give her a word of comfort ere He ascended to the Father. Joanna, also, was there, the wife of Herod's steward, who was another that went to the empty grave. These with Susanna and many others ministered unto them of their substance. They may not all have been so rich as Chuza's wife probably was; but what they had they used, and that freely.

Doubtless it was one of these who, as the previous chapter tells us, had brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, when she knew that He reclined at meat in the Pharisee's house, and standing behind at His feet weeping, this woman, a sinner, began to wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment. Such was the value she set on Him. His feet were soiled doubtless with the journey, and never had they been bathed with more precious water. Better indeed for her to use her tears thus, than even to have them put into God's bottle, or set down in God's book (compare Psalm **56.** 8 with **126.** 5). When, in the present day, saints desire to wash one another's feet, let them remember that tears give the only water good enough for His feet (compare Acts **9.** 4, 5 and 1 Corinthians **12.** 12—**13.** 13).

Well then, we note that such women were around Him with the twelve, when a great multitude came together to hear Him. Then He spake the parable of the sower and the seed which fell by the wayside, on the rock, among

thorns, into the good ground; and some had ears to hear, and some, alas! had not.

Now it was on one of these days that He entered into a boat, as Luke tells us in verse 22, after recording in verses 19-21 the visit of the Lord's mother and brethren. But Mark, whose record of this visit comes before the account of the parables, distinctly says that it was on the day when He had taught by the seaside, by the parable of the sower and many other parables, that when even was come He saith, "Let us go over unto the other side." We conclude that Mark gives us the order in which the incidents occurred that are recorded in Mark **3.** 31—**5.** 20.

If this is so, it makes it more remarkable that Luke should insert the visit of the Lord's mother and brethren where he does. "Take heed therefore" said the Lord, "how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have (or thinketh that he hath)." Then, ere He goes to the other side, whither some follow Him and some do not, His kinsfolk are brought on the scene, out of the order of time, to emphasize the solemn responsibility of those who come under the sound of His voice, that they be of the number of those who hear the word of God and do it. The crossing to the other side, which Mark records as taking place on that day, was accompanied by the Lord's stilling of a great storm of wind, and followed by the expulsion of many demons from a man who dwelt among the tombs. We thus identify the series of incidents with those recorded in Matthew **8.** 18-34 as well as those in Luke **8.** 22-39.

Differences in the Accounts of the Demoniacs.

Of course there are differences in the details recorded. Matthew tells of there being two demoniacs, but gives the shortest account of the incident. Mark's account is in some respects more like Matthew's than like Luke's, but, like Luke, he gives a longer account than Matthew. Mark tells us that the demoniac saw Jesus from afar and ran and worshipped, and crying out with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High

God? I adjure Thee by God, torment me not." This was because the Lord had said, "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." So that these words were evidently spoken by the man as the mouthpiece of the demon. Whether the running of the man to Jesus and his worshipping of Him were under the influence of the demon we cannot say—we think not. The Lord's reply to the demon was the question, What is thy name? The answer shows that though one demon in particular had possession of the man to make him speak what it pleased, he was yet but the spokesman of a numerous company, a legion of evil ones who inhabited the poor demoniac. So in verse 10, he besought Him much that He would not send them away, and in verse 12, "they besought Him." That they entered into about two thousand (2,000) swine shows that there were at least that number of them. The account in Matthew fully confirms this, though it is expressed in other words, whilst Luke's narrative makes it still more plain that one demon was the leader in this fearful tyranny that they exercised over their victim. This unclean spirit is mentioned thus in verse 29: "He was driven by the demon."

The man himself now comes on the scene clothed and in his right mind at the feet of Jesus. This is the only place for a person clothed and in his right mind to be. They who are far from Him have no clothing but rags; and as young men in Titus **2.** 6, and all elect sojourners in 1 Peter **4.** 7, are exhorted to be sober-minded, it may be worth mentioning that the word used is the same in all these passages, namely, Mark **5.** 15, Luke **8.** 35, Titus **2.** 6, 1 Peter **4.** 7 [1] (also Rom. **12.** 3, 2 Cor. **5.** 13). Σωφρονέω (sōphrŏnĕō), *to be sane*, from σωφρων (sōphrōn), *sane*, from σαὸς (saŏs), *sound*, and φρὴν (phrēn), *the mind*. So that perhaps we may learn that the entrance of His words will give sanity, and the evidence of sanity is found in sitting at His feet.

We must not, however, lose sight of the fact that this demoniac was no mere lunatic, as we now understand the term. That he really was indwelt by a multitude of these

[1] It ought to be pointed out that this word is translated in the Revised Version "Sound mind" in 1 Peter **4.** 7; the word "sober" there is not the same word. (J. C. R.)

malignant beings is clearly and plainly taught in these scriptures. So that if any would seek to throw doubts on the reality of unclean spirits or demons indwelling men and bending them to their foul purposes, it follows of necessity that they must give up all faith in the truthfulness and reliability of the Gospel narratives and in the person of Him of whom the Evangelists speak.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MARK 5. 21-43; LUKE 8. 40-56.

THE Lord's return from the cure of the demoniac to the other side of the water is connected in Matthew with the incident of the palsied man, but in Mark and Luke with that of the daughter of Jairus and the woman who had an issue. It seems pretty clear for the reasons given in the previous chapter that the Matthew **13.** teachings preceded in order of time the events recorded in Matthew **8.** 18-34. But we think that there is little or no doubt that the cure of the palsied man, that of the daughter of Jairus, and that of the woman with an issue, were very quickly after his return from the country of the Gaderenes (or Gergesenes). Which took place first, however, is a more difficult question.

Both Mark and Luke appear to indicate that Jairus met the Lord immediately, or almost immediately, on His return, but Matthew explicitly says that, when this ruler came, Jesus was saying those things recorded in Matthew **9.** 14-17. These words were elicited by questions of John's disciples. Tracing backward still further, we find verse 14, "Then come to Him." When was this? And the reply is, While He sat in Matthew's house, just after the healing of the palsied man. On looking up this incident in Mark and Luke, we find it in Mark **2.** 1 and Luke **5.** 17, but with a manifest indication of indefiniteness as to time in both cases. "After some days"—"On one of those days." These accounts, Mark **2.** 1-22 and Luke **5.** 17-39, agree well with one another, and with Matthew **9.** 1-17, as to the general order of the events recorded therein, and it therefore reduces itself to the single question. Can we, without straining the words, suppose that these incidents took place between verses 21 and 22 of Mark **5.** and between verses 40 and 41 of Luke **8**?

The Daughter of Jairus.

We now turn to the story of Jairus and his daughter. Jairus tells the Lord, "My daughter is even now dead" (Matthew), "is at the point of death" (Mark), whilst Luke says, "She lay a dying." The Lord Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples and a great multitude. We pass for the moment over the incident of the woman with an issue, but note that during the delay connected therewith they come from the ruler's house to say that his daughter was dead. "Fear not," said the Lord, "only believe."

He takes with Him only Peter and James and John, and enters the room with them and Jairus and the mother, and He puts the crowd out of the room. He then is in a room with these five persons and a girl supposed to be dead; believed to be dead by all. But was she dead? He said distinctly, not:—

"The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth" (Matthew).
"The child is not dead, but sleepeth" (Mark).
"She is not dead, but sleepeth" (Luke).

Yet, marvellous to relate, hundreds of Christians believe that she was dead, notwithstanding the Lord's words!

These are quite different to what He said about Lazarus in John, "Lazarus is fallen asleep." Jesus had spoken of his death. Jesus therefore said plainly, "Lazarus is dead." But of the girl He said, "She is not dead."

Moreover, the word sleepeth used in reference to the girl is never in the New Testament used of death. Καθεύδω (kathĕudō), I sleep, occurs in the following passages—Matthew **8.** 24, Mark **4.** 38, as to the Lord's sleep during the storm; Matthew **9.** 24, Mark **5.** 39, Luke **8.** 52, as to the daughter of Jairus; Matthew **13.** 25, Mark **4.** 27, in the parables of the tares and the sprouting seed; Matthew **25.** 5, as to the foolish virgins; Matthew **26.** 40, 43, 45; Mark **14.** 37, 40, 41; Luke **22.** 46, the disciples in Gethsemane; Mark **13.** 35, 36, gives a warning to watch and not to sleep, and this we also find in 1 Thessalonians **5.** in verses 6 and 7, but verse 10 says that whether we watch (same word as verse 6) or sleep we shall live together with Him, He having

died for us. Ephesians 5. 14 finally tells us that light saith to the sleeping saint, "Awake, and arise from among the dead."

Thus this word is never used of death. It is clear that the child was in what we might call a trance or swoon, which Jairus and the mother and every one else took to be really death. One in the Lord's place anything less than Himself had here a great opportunity to get credit for raising a dead one to life. And this whole narrative which so clearly shows how far He was above any attempt at manufacturing a reputation is as to all its vital points given by the three Evangelists in just the same form. The statement of the many that the girl was dead, the privacy in which the miracle was performed, the Lord's clear words that the damsel was not dead but sleeping, all these facts are told by the three narrators in accounts which have many points of difference as to wording.

The Woman who Touched the Hem of His Garment.

It is remarkable that each also tells of the cure of her who only touched the hem of His garment as He was going to the ruler's house. There must be great importance here —perhaps the lack of hurry is one thing to which attention is meant to be directed. Here again we note how much detail Mark gives, and Luke too, in a less degree, compared with Matthew. As to the verities of both these signs, it should be remembered that Luke speaks with the greater weight, if we deal with the question as a matter of human evidence, because as a physician He knew more than others of the matters in hand. He, then, definitely records that this issue of blood had lasted twelve years, and no physician had been able to cure it, but that on her merely touching the border of the Lord's garment it had immediately been staunched. But more than that, the man who knew something, not a little, of what medical skill could effect, and who cannot be regarded as an ignorant man or a fanatic, sets down in plain words the source of the healing in the Lord's own words, "Some one did touch Me; for I perceived that power had gone forth from Me."

CHAPTER XXV.

MARK **1.** 21—**3.** 30; LUKE **5.** 12—**6.** 19.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW CURED OF FEVER.

THE expulsion of an unclean spirit from a man in the synagogue in Capernaum is the first incident recorded in Mark after the call of the four fishermen disciples, and straightway He goes into the house of Simon and Andrew. This seems now to have been in Capernaum, though they had been brought up in Bethsaida; at least Bethsaida is said to have been their city in John **1.** 44. Simon's mother-in-law having fever, they tell Him and He cures her. They had no need to beseech Him, though, as Luke tells us, they did so. Surely Matthew, Mark, Luke give us here three characteristic accounts. Matthew tells of the sovereign act of grace done by the King. He needed not to be besought, nor even to be told. Mark tells of the Servant of God who, hearing that she was sick, healed her. Luke tells of the Son of man, whose human heart is reached by those who besought Him on her behalf. The King touches her hand, and the fever flees. The Servant takes her by the hand and raises her up, and she is able to do service. The Son of man stands over her and grieves for the inroads that disease has made. But had He been Son of man only, His pity had been in vain. Luke tells us that He was also Son of God, and as Son of God He rebuked the fever as He had rebuked the unclean spirit just before; and great though the fever was, as the Physician tells us, it left her; and Luke is alone in telling us that she rose up, though, like Mark, he tells that she ministered unto them.

On that evening, at sunset, many were brought unto Him, sick ones and demoniacs, and the sick were healed and the demons cast out. After such a day of work He might well be weary and take extra rest on the morrow. But in the morning, a great while before day, the Servant goes to commune with the Master. And then He goes on to preach

in other places throughout Galilee. This passage (Mark **1.** 21-34) clearly gives us one day's work, of which we get a similar, though not an identical account in Luke **4.** 31-41.

Healing of a Leper.

Mark then gives an account of the healing of a leper who came beseeching Him and kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean"; and He stretched forth His hand and touched him, and saith unto him, "I will; be thou clean." It is clear from Matthew **8.** 1-5, read in connexion with Luke **7.** 1, that the leper was healed just outside Capernaum. For though Luke gives an account of this cleansing of the leper in chapter **5.** verses 12-16, with no indication whatever of time and place, yet in Luke **7.** 1 (following **6.**) we find that, coming down from the mount, He went into Capernaum, and, as Matthew **8.** 1-5 makes plain, the leper met Him on the way. Mark goes on, in chapter **2.**, to tell us of another Capernaum incident which we have already given reason for thinking took place somewhat later. On this occasion he goes from Capernaum to the seaside, and it was at this time that Levi, the son of Alphæus, was called and made Him a great feast in his house, which was probably in Capernaum also. These incidents may be collected here, perhaps, partly because of their connexion with Capernaum. At any rate it is notable how many signs were done in Capernaum and the immediate vicinity.

At the Feast in Matthew's House.

At the feast in Matthew's house we have in addition to the Lord's words, telling of His errand to sinners, a conversation as to fasting. For Luke makes it plain that this took place in Levi's house. Indeed, Matthew **9.** 2-17, Mark **2.** 1-22, Luke **5.** 17-39, record this series of events in identical order, and thus seem to mark their intimate connexion very plainly. Strange it seemed to them that good folks like the Pharisees should fast, and His disciples should eat and drink at their pleasure, considering what manner of sinners and base persons they were. But though sinners in very deed, they had a cause of joy, for they

knew Him who had power to forgive sins, and He was with them. It was good for the Pharisees to fast, for they knew no Saviour and no salvation; and as for those of John's disciples who had not profited enough from John's teaching to become disciples of the Lord Jesus, their teacher was in prison, and they, too had cause to fast.

In addition to all this He spake a parable to them, and perhaps some of John's disciples heard and understood, and if so they got new garments instead of trying to patch their old ones, and fresh wine-skins enabled them to keep a store of new wine.

Through the Cornfields on the Sabbath Day.

Next we have in Mark **2.** 23—**3.** 6, a passage parallel to that in Matthew **12.** 1-21 and Luke **6.** 1-11. Here it seems to be Matthew who gives (though only in general terms) an indication of when these events transpired, and this order is different from that in Mark. We must, perhaps, look for some special reason for Mark's connecting the eating of the ears of corn on the Sabbath with the teaching given in Levi's house. This particular sequence is also found in Luke, so that it may be the order of time that is given here, but both Mark **2.** 23 and Luke **6.** 1 commence with the words, "It came to pass."

Certainly there is much in the cornfield teaching that harmonizes in a marked manner with that of the previous chapter. There is the same disregard of the traditional ideas of the Pharisees, the same indication that His care for His disciples and His goodness to them were not to be trammelled by unauthorized ritual. But still more He appears to be inaugurating the new order of things that was to take the place of that which, waxing old, was ready to vanish away. The old wine-skins had served their day and could certainly not contain such generous new wine as this. The Pharisees were indignant, for they made it their business to bind heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, whereas His yoke is easy and His burden light.

It would have seemed from Matthew and Mark to have been the same day, but Luke says it was on another Sabbath, that He healed the man with a withered hand. His question, Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good,

or do harm? to save a life, or to kill? silenced them, for they were not minded to confess themselves wrong. Note His anger and His grief at the hardening of their heart. They, poor, deluded men, took counsel how they might destroy Him!

The verses 13-19 of Mark **3.** tell of His appointing the Twelve after His withdrawal to the sea, and Luke gives this appointment immediately after the healing of the man with a withered hand, whilst Matthew only names the Twelve in connexion with their sending forth, in Matthew **10.** It will be observed, however, that Mark **3.** 19-30 is the parallel passage to Matthew **12.** 22-37.

Some comments on Mark **3.** 31-**5.** 43 will be found in chapters XXI., XXIII., XXIV.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Luke **6.** 20—**7.** 35.

It should be clearly understood that whilst we are desirous in these notes of, as far as possible, fairly facing any difficulty that a comparison of the independent records of the Evangelists may seem to introduce, we by no means attempt to solve all the questions that arise as to the order of events, or to construct a single story in which the incidents shall follow in their temporal sequence. But we think that the consideration of these various points of difficulty may be very profitable if carried out in a humble spirit of credence, and we are not without a thought that this has already been manifested in these notes. The first thing we have before us on this occasion is to glance through those parts of Luke's gospel that have not been touched on hitherto.

The story of the Lord's visit to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, that is recorded in Luke **4.** 16-30, might seem at first to be an account of very early days of His ministry, but verse 23 will correct this impression to some extent, though we can hardly say that there is any definite indication of when this visit took place.

We have already commented on Luke **4.** 31—**6.** 19, in chapters XIV., XVII., XX., XXIV., XXV., and some notes on Luke **7.** 36—**8. 56** will be found in chapters XV., XIX., XXI., XXIII., XXIV.

The Lord's words recorded in Luke **6.** 20-49 have much in common with those in Matthew **5., 6., 7.,** but they are given in a different connexion; we might think, and perhaps correctly, that this address was really given just after the appointment of the twelve apostles, yet if we trace this further back, as previously noted in our comments on Luke **6.** 1-19, we soon land ourselves in difficulties much more considerable than any we have hitherto dealt with, and therefore we, for the present, forbear to go further.

The events given by Luke immediately after this discourse are, firstly, the healing of the centurion's servants, which Matthew also places almost immediately after (see chapter XVI.). We only need to suppose that the healing of the leper, recorded at an indefinite time in Luke **5.** 12-16, really occurred, as Matthew seems to say, just before that of the centurion's boy. If the healing of Peter's mother-in-law followed quickly after, then the account of this and of the expulsion of the demon, which both Mark and Luke tell us immediately preceded, must have occurred between verses 17 and 18 of Luke **7.** This offers no difficulties in itself.

We naturally however look with interest for any indications there may be of the date of the mission that John sent. We note that Matthew, who records it in chapter **11.**, says that John heard in the prison the works of Christ, but Luke says that he was told these things; this clearly includes the raising of the widow of Nain's son, which occurred soon after that of the centurion's servant.

Of course the careful reader will observe the Gospel according to Luke to be that which records that the Lord had compassion on the bereaved mother who was a widow. It was the Son of man whose pity stopped the bier; it was the Son of God whose voice gave life to the dead.

We shall conclude this portion by some observations on Mark **6.** 7-31, Luke **9.** 1-10 and parallel passages.

Mark and Luke give us here their brief account of the sending forth of the apostles, which answers to the fuller passage in Matthew **10.** We then read in Mark, "And King Herod heard (*thereof*); for His name had become known." In Luke, "Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done." In Matthew **14.** we read, "At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus."

The Murder of John the Baptist.

Then in all three gospels follows an account of John's murder, and following—

Matthew says, "They went and told Jesus. Now when Jesus heard (*it*), He withdrew . . . to a desert place apart."

Mark says, "The apostles . . . told Him all things whatsoever they had done . . . He saith unto them 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place.'"

Luke says, "The apostles, when they were returned, declared unto Him what things they had done. And He took them . . . apart."

John says, "Jesus went away to the other side of the sea."

Then every one tells the wondrous sign of the Desert Meal, when five thousand were fed.

Here then we have a marked and unmistakable epoch in the Lord's ministry—this particular journey which He took to a desert place on the other side of the sea of Tiberias.

It is clear that it followed the murder of John the Baptist, and that it followed the return of the twelve from their first sending forth.

The order of these matters offers some difficulty. The story of John the Baptist is of course retrospective in character in all three gospels; that is, we are told that Herod said, "This is John the Baptist," and then we have the explanation, how that Herod himself was not altogether hardened, lawless though he was; but the strength of a woman's hate took advantage of a man in his hour of weakness. The poor man had a birthday—better for him perhaps if he had never been born—and there was a feast,—eating and drinking, and worse. For the daughter of his brother's wife danced and pleased him well, and he rashly swore to give her what she pleased. He was sorry, but his tears could not save him. He dared not make light of his oath in the presence of his courtiers, and John was beheaded. It seemed a small thing for Herod to marry his brother's wife, but it was the first step in that course which led him to imbrue his hands in the blood of John the Baptist, to take the life of one who was far, far greater and better than he!

Mark and Luke seem to connect the Lord's withdrawal with the return of the apostles; Mark does so very explicitly.

Matthew says, "When Jesus heard." Now what this means is not quite clear to the present writer. Does it

mean when He heard of John the Baptist's murder or when He heard what Herod the tetrarch said? We cannot say. Of course it might make a little difference in time, but perhaps not much.

The mention of Bethsaida in Luke 9. 10 seems to suggest that the journey was in two stages, unless there were a second Bethsaida on the other side of the sea of Galilee.

These various difficulties to which we have alluded will, we hope, give rise to much searching of the Scriptures, especially by younger believers, whom we may once more remind of the profit that comes of earnest study of the Word.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MATTHEW **14.** 13-21; MARK **6.** 30-44; LUKE **9.** 10-17; JOHN **6.** 1-14.

THE GREAT DESERT MEAL.

A COMPARISON of the four Gospel records shows that there is scarcely an incident in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, from His baptism till the evening of the last passover, that is narrated in each of them, except this exemplary sign of the feeding of the five thousand. Doubtless, therefore, the Holy Spirit has desired to lay special stress upon it.

The shorter gospels, Mark and John, give the longer accounts and the fuller particulars of connected matters, John recording a comparatively long discourse arising out of the sign. The narratives of Matthew and Luke are briefer, and Luke makes no mention of the walking on the sea that followed.

All the gospels tell us that the multitudes followed Him; Matthew and Mark say on foot. The Greek word is used to signify either walking as opposed to riding or driving, or travelling by land as opposed to going by water. The corresponding verb is used in Acts **20.** 13, see text and margin of Revised Version in the three passages. As however, Mark tells us that they ran, it seems clear that the journey was by foot.

He comes forth and sees them—a great multitude—and He is moved with compassion. The King, the Son of David, heals their sick (Matthew). The perfect Servant of God is grieved that the sheep have no shepherd, and begins to teach them many things (Mark). Observe this carefully. He does not tell them merely to believe and be saved, as might a modern Gospel preacher. Many are the things they need to be taught, and He begins.

WHO FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS?

Compare here from Acts **24.** 25, how he who filled up on his part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ, reasoned with Felix of righteousness and temperance and the judgment to come.

Luke tells us how the perfect Son of Man welcomed the multitudes, and spake to them of God as a King, and healed those who had need thereof.

The day wore on, and still they continued to come for when the disciples came to Him in the evening, to send the multitudes away to buy food, He sees a great multitude coming to Him, and Himself asks Philip whence they could buy bread to feed so many. Compare John with Matthew, Mark, Luke. Philip, and the rest, all agreed that two hundred pennyworth of bread (say about £7 worth) would not be enough, but Andrew said that a lad had five barley loaves and two fishes. What good were they?

Note how Matthew tells us that when the King says: "Give ye them to eat," they object, that they had not enough. He replies, "Bring them hither to Me"; whilst in Mark their question, "Shall we go and buy?" is met by the reply, "How many loaves have ye?"

Then He bids that they be all seated in order, on the green grass (Mark), in rows of fifties and hundreds. Preparation being now made, it is for Him to show His kingly bounty; to do His work as the Perfect Servant; to manifest the association of His divine power with the compassion of His human heart; to show Himself indeed to be the Sent One from God.

Taking into His blessed hands the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up into the Heavens He blessed and He brake the loaves, and gave them to the disciples. Let it be noted that He did not at once put into the hand of each of the twelve sufficient bread to feed 400 men, this would have been an impossible load for them to carry. They must have come back to Him again and again; for what a disciple received from the Lord he could give to the rank of hungry men on whom he was waiting—no more; so it is now. The Lord Himself alone had the inexhaustible store. As He brake up the loaves (to translate freely the κατέκλασε katěklasě that Mark uses) there was always bread in His hands. Here was worthily fulfilled

the word of truth:—

"There is that scattereth and increaseth yet more."

So great was the multiplication that bread enough for 5,000 men, besides women and children, passed through the disciples' hands, besides broken fragments with which twelve baskets were filled, for future use. The two fishes also were divided and every man had as much as he would.

In the present day many who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ seek to account for His miracles by natural causes. Many dignitaries of professing Christendom are in the most wretched quandary; endeavouring to keep pace with the times, they feel bound to reconcile what they believe with what are supposed to be the teachings of science as to natural law. They must needs, therefore, explain all the miracles of Scripture as being brought about by what are called natural causes, except perhaps a few that owe their place in the record to some mistake on the part of the writer, for it is thought rational enough by so-called Rationalists that the Scriptures, though they have come from God, contain many mistakes, both of fact and of doctrine. But if too many mistakes were thus admitted not only the Scriptures, but themselves as spiritual guides would be discredited, and their craft would be in danger. (Witness for instance the recent utterances as to the virgin birth of the Holy One.)

We, therefore, may note that this Desert Breaking of the Loaves was a definite and unmistakable manifestation of divine power. It stands on record in each of the four Gospels. It is true unless they are false. If they are false here, why should we trust them anywhere? But they are true, and this is true, and no explanation of this sign by what are called natural causes is possible. It was a manifestation, clear and simple, of the Divine power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MATTHEW **14.** 22-36; MARK **6.** 45-56; JOHN **6.** 15-71.

THE LORD WALKS UPON THE SEA AND CALMS THE WATERS.

IMMEDIATELY after the desert meal, that is somewhere about sunset, the disciples at His bidding departed by boat, and He then dismissed the multitudes and went into the mountain to pray. When the fourth watch of the night came they were still in the midst of the sea, tossed about with waves. If, as is supposed, the night was divided into four watches, this was the last, which just preceded the dawn of day, when He came to them walking on the water.

What a night of fruitless labour—twenty-five or thirty furlongs in perhaps nine hours!

Note Peter's impetuosity, but beware of despising him for lack of faith. The moment the Lord joined them the wind and waves were quiet, and they were at the land, whither they went.

So will it be with us in our little boat, storm-tossed in this our weary journey. The night is wearing away, and it may be in the fourth watch (the morning as it is called, Mark **13.** 35), that He will come, and when He is present

Then we shall be where we would be.

The next day the multitude follow in boats, and come to Capernaum, seeking Him. "Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?" they ask. He replied, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled."

He sets before them a worthier aim, and tells of a gift He has for them, but they reply, "What must we do?" He plainly sets before them this first needful work, to believe on Him whom God had sent.

Then these very people who had eaten of the loaves, who had seen the manifestation of His power say: "What then doest Thou for a sign?" and speak of the manna given in the wilderness. What madness! What blindness! Alas, how like to this are we!

But He does now speak of a greater sign, for He tells of Himself as the Bread of God, the Bread of Life; but they saw and believed not.

Note how in this gospel of the Sent One eternal life is so often spoken of. "Every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on Him, should have eternal life."

The Jews murmur. They thought of Him merely as a man, a son of Joseph. How could He be come out of Heaven? How like to the many of to-day, who willingly admit the beauties and glories of the Lord Jesus Christ as a man, and use concerning Him no stinted language of adulation, but have no conception of Him as the One who came from Heaven!

Again they strive because He spake of Himself as Living Bread, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." "How," they asked, "can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

Yet the truth abides, that except one eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, one has not life in oneself. Some comments on this passage will be found in NEEDED TRUTH, volume **6,** pages 65-70; we need therefore add no more here.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MATTHEW **15.** 1—**16.** 12; MARK **7.** 1—**8.** 26.

DEFILEMENT FROM WITHIN.

THE LORD appears to have been in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida and Capernaum on the north-west shores of the sea of Galilee, whither He returned after the sign of the feeding of the five thousand.

It was natural that the Pharisees and scribes should seek to incriminate as a transgressor of their tradition one who shamed them by His care for the multitude, and His kindness to them. The people might starve for all they cared, but there must be no eating with unwashen hands! It will be noted that the Lord gives no explanation, makes no excuse. We may be assured from Scriptural evidence that cleanliness had its due place in His teaching and practice. But it was not cleanliness for which the Pharisees cared. In the original law of Moses we may see side by side, provisions for securing the health of the people (sanitary regulations as we might call them), and teaching by figure as to the defilement of sin and the Divine remedy. But the traditions that were so dear to the Pharisees were not in any real sense in conformity with the law of Moses, either on its hygienic or its typical side.

On the contrary, as the Lord clearly showed, they encouraged their disciples, for example, not to honour their parents. And this for the sufficient reason that their hearts were far from God.

As to defilement the Lord spake clearly; it comes from within and not from without. Evil thoughts and other evil things come from the heart and defile, whilst food taken into the belly does not defile. It may be more or less good; there may be various reasons for eating or not eating. But the Lord who spake with authority took this opportunity to make all meats clean (see the end of Mark **7.** 19). It is instructive to find this definite statement in

Mark if we connect Peter in any way with the writing of this gospel, and compare Acts **10.**, "What God hath cleansed."

Crumbs for the Dogs.

So much for the cleanness of all meats. The Lord having now gone far away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon (see map), a Canaanitish woman, a Greek, but a Syro-phœnician by race, comes to Him and desires the blessing of healing for her daughter. To this she had not that claim which the lost sheep of the house of Israel had, but these were careless of their crumbs, wasteful of the heavenly bread that had come to them, and by taking the place of a dog she secured a blessing from Him who honours faith.

The Second Desert Meal.

Again we find the Lord surrounded by a great multitude in a desert place. Whether it was in the same place where the five thousand were fed or not, we cannot say. Matthew speaks of many signs being done, whilst Mark gives particulars of one case, that of a deaf man with an impediment in his speech, whom He privately healed; so that they said, "He hath done all things well; He maketh even the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

The feeding of this multitude has points of resemblance to that of the five thousand. But there are differences which are not unimportant.

Though the Lord could feed five thousand with five loaves, He made use of all the seven loaves to feed the four thousand; a lesson to us to use what we have. (Compare the sad confidence expressed in Joshua **7.** 3.) Note then that He took the seven loaves.

Doctrinal Leaven.

Again the disciples find themselves short of bread as they are crossing in a boat, and this occupies their minds to the exclusion of the scene that just preceded their embarkation. The Pharisees and Sadducees had been tempting Him, and He had made fitting reply, and now proceeds to warn His disciples against a threefold leaven of evil teaching.

The leaven of the (1) Pharisees and (2) Sadducees.

The leaven of the (1) Pharisees and the leaven of (3) Herod.

But how hardened were they not to remember the five loaves among the five thousand, and the seven loaves among the four thousand, and how hardened are our hearts to forget the bread He gave us yesterday, and that we had the week before, because the cupboard seems empty to-day!

The healing of a blind man at Bethsaida, and that of the deaf stutterer in the borders of Decapolis, are only recorded by Mark.

CHAPTER XXX.

MATTHEW **16.** 13—**18.** 35; MARK **8.** 27—**9.** 50; LUKE **9.** 18-50.

AT CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

FOR reasons which we may perhaps surmise, but which are not, I think, clearly stated, the Lord now went to Cæsarea Philippi. This seems to have been the extreme limits of His journeys in the north, east of the Jordan, as Phœnicia was in the north-west. We have commented on the Lord's word at Cæsarea Philippi, as recorded in Matthew, in NEEDED TRUTH, volume **10.** pages 25 and following, and need add no more on that subject here.

We desire first to point out that the three passages named above clearly refer to the same period of time, and in general to the same events. This comparison of the gospels becomes in many ways more interesting as we approach the dread climax of His life.

With important variations we get in each gospel, first, the discourse that is commenced by the query, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matthew) "that I am?" (Mark and Luke). Second, the scene in the mountain of transfiguration, to which a fourth testimony is borne by Peter in his first letter. Thirdly, the cure of the epileptic boy who had a dumb and deaf spirit. Fourthly, His words of prediction, "The Son of Man shall be delivered up." Fifthly, an account of their dispute as to greatness, and the Lord's reply.

THE GLORY.

Perhaps the scene in the Mount of Transfiguration first calls for a word of comment. It is evident that the Lord's face took on it some of that brightness that belongs to Him as the Eternal One. His face shone as the sun, that is with its own light, so that His very garments glistered as they noticed when they withdraw their dazzled eyes from the brilliancy of His countenance. Compare Revelation **1.** 14,

His eyes as a flame of fire. How all the lights of this universe will pale when we see His face in the glad morning of His presence!

This view of His glory seems to have done much to make Peter, James, and John know who He really was, as we gather from their inquiry as to Elijah.

The story of the didrachma only Matthew gives, and he gives in connexion with the story of the little child the Lord's words as to assembly discipline, and His presence in the midst of such as have been gathered unto His name.

We ask our young readers to note specially the order and place of the incidents of these passages, because of the place they occupy in the Lord's life as given us by the different narrators.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Luke **9.** 51—**10.** 37.

The Parenthetical Section of Luke.

Commencing, I think, at verse 57 of chapter **9.** and ending at chapter **17.,** verse 10, we have a section of the Gospel according to Luke, in which the historical order is almost entirely set aside. Some of the contents of this section find their parallels in Matthew, chapters **8.** to **13.,** and from the manner of the narration there we conclude that the events occurred in the period between the betrayal and murder of the Baptizer, with which those chapters are chiefly concerned. But very much of this section consists of the sayings of the Lord, and some words which seem almost, or quite identical with these are found in Matthew among what was said within a very few days of the crucifixion (namely in Matthew **22.** and **23.**; see **26.** 1. 2). Again, this section contains much that is peculiar to Luke, and as to this it seems in many cases impossible to tell to what period the incidents or sayings belong.

It may be well at the very first to suggest that in some cases sayings that seem almost identical may have been uttered at different times; that is to say, under different circumstances the Lord may have said the same or nearly the same words. If this be admitted we must, however, be careful not to abuse the idea by carrying it too far.

The more or less parenthetical character of this section may, we think, be discerned by considering verses 51 to 56 of chapter **9.**

The parallel passages of Matthew, Mark and Luke considered in our last chapter first deal with the Lord's sayings and doings in the far-off parts of Cæsarea Philippi. He and the disciples then come southward to Capernaum. where the lesson of the little child was given to them, with which Mark and Luke connect John's mistaken zeal in forbidding one who was casting out demons in the Lord's name.

Matthew and Mark both then record the Lord's further journey south first as far as Judæa beyond Jordan and then up to Jerusalem, and Luke **18.** 31 is strictly parallel to Matthew **20.** 17 and Mark **10.** 32, relating the solemn prediction of the impending tragedy.

Tracing Luke backwards we have **17.** 11—**18.** 30 as the parallel of Matthew **19.** 1—**20.** 16 and Mark **10.** 1-31, with this difference; that Luke mentions the Lord passing through Samaria and healing ten lepers as He entered into a certain village.

Luke **17.** 11 begins: "And it came to pass, as they were on the way to Jerusalem, that He was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village."

It seems significant that Luke **9.** 51 should tell that when the days were well nigh come that He should be received up He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, He was rejected at one village and went to another. Was this second village that of Luke **17.** 12? It may or may not be so. But it seems clear that **9.** 51-56 and **17.** 11 and what follows belong to a regular narrative of the Lord's last southward journey and that from Luke **9.** 57 to **17.** 10 we have inserted more or less in a parenthetical manner, certainly in moral rather than temporal order, some of the doings and many of the sayings of the Son of Man.

Paragraph 1. Following the Lord.

Luke **9.** 57 commences: "As they went in the way," and then records the incidents contained in Matthew **8.** 19-22 (see chapter XVII.) together with a third which Matthew does not mention. As Matthew connects the scribes coming with that crossing to the country of Gadarenes (Gerasenes) which Matthew, Mark (**4.** 35—**5.** 20) and Luke also (**8.** 22, 39) record in the section of those gospels belonging to the period between John's betrayal and his murder we cannot doubt that there is some definite reason why Luke, who sets forth things in order, should give this paragraph the setting which it has.

One reason may be that the force of these sayings of the Lord grew stronger as they went on their way in a path of increasing difficulty, calling for more intense devotion.

The reply to him who would have bid farewell to those at home calls for notice ; it is peculiar to Luke and so is the mention of the Kingdom of God (twice)in these verses.

Paragraph 2. The Seventy.

The sending forth of these seventy suggests more questions of temporal order than there is now time or space to discuss. " After these things " perhaps goes back to the first six verses of chapter **9.** which it must be remembered is more or less closely associated with the passage, Luke **8.** 22-39, which we have just pointed to as marking the period when the words of Luke **9.** 57 was spoken. There is thus a possibility of rather regarding Luke **9.** 7-56 as inserted before its chronological place than **9.** 57—**10.** 24 as being put after it. But the subject is too large to deal with here.

The general charge, Luke **10.** 3-12, is to be compared with that in Luke **9.** 3-6 and Matthew **10.** 5-15—but there are differences to be noted.

Paragraph 3. Revelation unto Babes.

The return of the seventy was with joy, and He said nothing to weaken it. But He gave them an added and greater cause, a cause which evoked His own rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, that what wise and understanding ones fail to know because of the veil that is upon them is revealed unto babes.

Note that in the matter of revelation and all else there is most perfect concord between the Father and the Son, and note too the deep significance of this mutual relationship. He is the Son of the Father ; and " the Father " by no means signifies our Father ; it is His Father to whom and of whom He has spoken.

Paragraph 4. The Lawyer's Neighbour.

This is perhaps the best known passage in the whole of this deeply interesting section. The period is probably quite late if Matthew **22.** 35 is really the parallel passage. But what a luminous commentary it is on the previous paragraph!

How glad indeed would David or Joseph have been to have heard the story of the Samaritan! In Matthew **22.** 35 perhaps we see that from the Pharisees all this was hidden; in Luke that to the disciples it was revealed. I think this lawyer's eyes and ears were opened; but by his fruits he was then to be known whether indeed he went and was a good Samaritan. We hear of the Good Samaritan and truly it is a luminous figure of the Son of Man Himself. But it surely goes farther than that, for it was given to the lawyer, who asked for his neighbour, that he might become a Samaritan neighbour to others.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LUKE **10.** 38—**11.** 36.

PARAGRAPH 5. STILL ON THEIR WAY.

PERHAPS Martha was the elder sister and a real good woman she was; but the Lord had no wish that she should spend her time cooking many dishes for Him. A married woman has to be careful, Paul tells us, to please her husband; and he may be a most difficult man to please. But Martha's heavenly Guest wanted herself; one dish was needful for the body and had she been content in humility to place this before Him there would have been room for her with Mary at the Lord's feet. To serve indeed is well; to be cumbered therewith is not.

PARAGRAPHS 6, 7. PRAYER.

Here fitly comes in the prayer which it becomes a child of God to pray. "*Father*"—here "Our Father" is distinctly implied. He who loves us and cares for us, because He has begotten us.

Hallowed be Thy name. Not lightly to be uttered, not carelessly or for words' sake used, but reverently as a hallowed thing indeed—"Thy name."

Thy Kingdom come. All petitions are included here. "Thy will be done" is here implied though not expressed. Let God be known as King whether in the heart, the home, the assembly, the Community, as in Heaven to-day or on earth very soon—and all is well.

Give us day by day bread for the coming day. What that bread shall be we well may leave to our Father; He knows our need and loves us well.

And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. Alas! for us if we do not.

And bring us not into temptation. Humbled thus on our knees we are less in danger of a fall.

For further commentary see verses 5 to 13.

Paragraph 8. Demons and their Prince.

A demon having been cast out from a poor dumb man he began to speak and the multitudes marvelled, but there were those who attributed the power to Beelzebub the prince of the demons. The sign of healing is evidently recorded to introduce the discourse which followed.

Matthew **9.** 32-34 records very briefly just such a sign as this as immediately following a healing of two blind men. But an account more closely parallel is to be found in Matthew **12.** 22-45—and perhaps Mark **3.** 20-30 refers to the same incident. Mark, however, records no sign of healing and Matthew in chapter **12.** mentions that the poor fellow was blind as well as dumb. It is not quite clear to us therefore whether Matthew **9.** 32 or **12.** 22 refers to the incident that Luke records, or perhaps they may both refer to the same.

The use of the names Satan and Beelzebub needs careful study. It needs consideration whether Beelzebub is another name for Satan or whether it denotes another person. Compare the distinction in Ephesians **2.** 2 between the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience and the prince whose servant that spirit is (see R.V. or the Greek).

Note the fearful picture of Israel's latter day.

Paragraph 9. Beatitudes.

Short and full of meaning. Here we have blessedness and greater blessedness. (Luke **11.** 27-28.).

Paragraphs 10, 11. Signs and Lights.

Many were the signs that He did, but alas for those who sought for signs. Observe how Matthew includes this in the passage **12.** 22-45, showing that it was the Pharisees who asked for the sign. But here it is given more generally. "This generation," not some or many, but the generation as a whole. (Luke **11.** 29-36.).

But what use were signs to them? In every day matters they were not so foolish as to put a lamp in a cellar or under a bushel for those who enter in to see the light (it is not here the light on a hill for a distant one to see). But with the eye, that is the light of the body, they were less careful; there was no simpleness of aim in their looking, the light

that really was in them, their knowledge of Old Testament Scripture for example, gave them no illumination. They read and knew of Jonah and of Sheba's queen, but they learnt nothing thereby for it was darkness to them. Who has not experienced the possibility of reading even aloud without a thought of what is read because of the pre-occupation of the mind and heart with other things? So was it with these. Let us see that it be not so with us.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Parenthetical Portion of Luke Continued.

Luke **11.** 37—**12.** 59.

At the Pharisee's Table.

The word ἀριστάω, aristaō, here translated "to dine" (margin "to breakfast"), occurs also in John **21.** 12, 15, whilst the corresponding noun occurs in Matthew **22.** 4, Luke **11.** 38, **14,** 12. The words seem to have originally referred to a meal such as we should call breakfast, and this appears to be the meaning in John **21.** 12, 15. But a meal not so early in the day is often meant, as for instance in Luke **14.** 12 and Matthew **22.** 4; this answers somewhat to the modern notion of luncheon (or midday dinner); and is contrasted in Luke **14.** 12 with δεῖπνον dĕipnŏn, which is the principal meal of the day, dinner proper, taken sometimes quite late, and often called supper. The washing that the Lord had neglected was evidently a ceremonial bathing. He was the one of whom above all others it had been written

> "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart."

The Lord's words [1] therefore bear on ceremonial cleanness and the dictum is "Give for alms those things which are within, and behold, all things are clean unto you." "Those things which are within" may mean "within your power," "what you can," but it appears to show that almsgiving must be from the heart.

The following words find a fairly close parallel in Matthew **23.** Whether they were uttered at the Pharisee's table or in the temple later, or on both occasions, does not seem certain. But in view of verse 53, we incline to think that these words were spoken in the Pharisee's house.

[1] See Appendix I., Page 181.

The Fear of God.

The real mischief of the Pharisees was hypocrisy. This was and is like leaven, spreading amongst all who come into contact with its influence, and corrupting them to become in turn sources of fresh infection. The remedy for this evil which the Lord provides is Light. God is light, and the fear of God is the great prophylactic against hypocrisy as well as against cowardice (see further Needed Truth, volume **13.** page 200).

Riches, True and False.

Covetousness, too, gives way when the ear is opened to hear God speaking; for then may be discerned the difference between having treasure laid up for oneself and being rich toward God.

Your Father.

As the words to the Pharisees took us on to what is given towards the close of the Gospel according to Matthew, so the present portion finds its parallel in Matthew in the charge given to the twelve apostles (chapter **10.**).

Note that while in the paragraph (verses 13 to 21) which commences with the appeal of one of the multitude, it is God who speaks to the rich man who was not rich toward God; in the paragraph (verses 22 to 34) where the Lord turns to His disciples the God who feeds the ravens and clothes the grass is named "your Father." This fatherhood of God is limited to those who are born again, and has special reference to His fatherly care for them as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Watchful Servants.

The following words as to watching find a parallel in Matthew **24.** as uttered just after the Lord had gone out from the temple. Their place in Luke is certainly determined by their close moral connexion with the previous paragraph, which Matthew gives in such a very different context. There may be fear of God in the heart and the Kingdom of the Father may be at one time the object of earnest solicitude; and anon one may become weary, the lamps go out, and the servant be unready. Peter's question elicits clear evidence that the teaching here is not primarily

dispensational, limited in its application to these or to those; but moral and far-reaching. Who is a steward let him be faithful and wise; who is a servant, let him be watching; to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.

And, alas! for those who seek for peace at any price. He was first by interpretation King of Righteousness, afterward King of Peace; faithfulness must therefore come first with every true servant, cost it what it may.

To the Multitude.

Moreover there were solemn times coming whereof He spoke, and to those who knew nothing of serving Him He turned with at least a word of warning, lest unawares they find themselves beyond mercy and beyond hope.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Luke **13.** 1—**17.** 10.

No Difference.

The solemn words with which chapter **12.** closed led some to tell Him of the sad fate which befell certain Galilean sinners. How apt we all are to think badly of others' sins and lightly of our own. But He, as the forerunner had done previously, preaches repentance as needful alike for all.

Moreover, what differences there are (the fig-tree parable shows) are such as to entail greater condemnation on those who have had greater privileges.

The Sabbath Day.

Of the three miracles of which a record is found in this parenthetical section of Luke, two are recorded in this gospel only, and both of these were performed on a sabbath day. No other indication of time seems to be given in either case (Luke **13.** 10-21. **14.** 1-6.

It was the sabbath day; He was in one of their synagogues teaching, and a woman was there having a spirit of infirmity so that she could not stand upright. He heals her and she glorifies God, but the ruler of the synagogue was indignant at this descration of the sabbath. Note the Lord's reply and what followed. He said therefore, "Unto what is the Kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it?" The similitude of a mustard tree growing from a small seed is first given, and then that of the leavening of three measures of meal by leaven which a woman added. Compare the allusion to the leaven of the Pharisees; the leaven is hidden away out of sight to do its work in the dark.

In chapter XXII. we referred to the seven parables recorded in Matthew **13.** and to the parallel passages in Mark **4.** and Luke **8.**, but omitted to mention the scripture now before us. Again we are struck with the way in which these paragraphs are brought in here, and though we fail to grasp adequately the fitness of their placing here, we are constrained to acknowledge that it is very good.

Still on the Way.

We are next reminded that He was on His way to Jerusalem, and these two paragraphs (verses 22 to 35) seem to belong to the last journey in a special way that much else does not. But perhaps such verses are put in here and there that we may really recognize that the very things which we more or less clearly believe did not actually take place in this period of the Lord's life, have a very distinct moral claim to the context in which Luke places them in his orderly gospel.

Again in a Pharisee's House.

Now comes the second of the two sabbath signs peculiar to Luke to which we referred above. He was in a Pharisee's house eating bread on the sabbath, and they, that is the host and the guests invited too, we suppose, were watching whether He would heal a man with the dropsy. This time He first silences them and then heals the sick man. Note that again the ass and ox are used as illustrations. In the former case it was a question of watering them, here of drawing them up from a well on a sabbath day.

The three following paragraphs still belong to the same story; those who had been bidden chose out the chief seats and those who entertained preferred to invite rich folk to their feasts.

Then comes the parable of the great supper, so full, so pregnant of the gospel message.

The Son of Man Taketh Hold of Man.

Then we have the warning of the cost of discipleship, a passage very like to what we get in Matthew **10.**, but here it leads to those records which are peculiar to Luke, which, perhaps, reach further down to the heart of man than

almost any other portions of Holy Writ. One might perhaps say that if chapters **15.** and **16.** of Luke were all that was revealed from God, we have in them such manifestation of Divine Grace, such assurance of Divine Love as meet man in his furthest wandering and his deepest need and tell him what he wants to know of God and God's salvation. Of how many may it be said that such and such a man was born here?

Found, Found, Found.

The parable of Luke **15.** begins with a hundred sheep; the shepherd seeks the lost one. The woman seeks the lost drachma. The prodigal son who has wandered far from home is met on his return by his father with love and forgiving tenderness. And what is the teaching of it all? The joy of the shepherd speaks of the joy in heaven when the Great Shepherd returns triumphant (see Psalm **24.**). The joy of the woman speaks of the joy in the presence of the angels of God at the recovery of the lost treasure. But the joy of the Father transcends all when His son who was dead again lives.

Take Heed.

But all this has its sidelight also to throw on the doings of those to whom has been committed trust. For the parable of the Found was the Lord's answer to the murmuring of those who should have been God's messengers in His message. They indeed were far enough away, but lest disciples should tread such paths of unfaithfulness, the parable of the steward follows with its wealth of teaching, direct and indirect.

Time will not allow of comment on much else that calls for earnest heed in these scriptures. A brief note expository of the picture of Sheol given in the end of Luke **16.** will be found in Needed Truth, volume **8.** pages 123 to 126.

The parenthetical portion ends with words of encouragement and words to teach humility also to those who seek grace to follow Him as His disciples in His pathway of obedience and faithfulness.

CHAPTER XXXV.

John 7. 1-36.

There is some doubt in the mind of the present writer as to whether we are given data in the gospels sufficient to fix the length of the Lord's ministry. But there are, as we have already indicated, certain well-marked epochs by which it is divided into periods, and a clear apprehension of these is first necessary if we wish to have a correct general knowledge of the Life.

In previous papers we have indicated the betrayal and the murder of John the Baptist as two events which mark two definite epochs in the history. From the former we can discern the temper of the people of Israel and the state into which they had sunk, and by the latter we can measure the rancour and hatred of the enemies of righteousness who sat in high places.

In connexion with each of these events, the Gospel according to Matthew records that the King of Israel withdrew Himself. In immediate connexion with the latter, we read of the Great Desert Meal, which is therefore the first great event that belongs to the period next after John's murder.

We now find from the Gospel according to John the Apostle that " after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill Him." He went up, however, to the Feast of Tabernacles, and subsequently went away again beyond Jordan (John **7.** 1, and **10.** 40).

After this He took His last journey to Jerusalem as recorded by all the evangelists.

It will thus be understood how we can divide the Lord's life on earth into two main parts, each of which falls naturally into four periods.

I. The thirty years of preparation divides itself into

1. Childhood. Matthew **1.** 18—**2.** 23. Luke **1.** 26—**2.** 40. John **1.** 14. Compare 1 Samuel **2.** 18-21.
2. Boyhood. Luke **2.** 41-51. Compare Daniel **1.**
3. Youth. Luke **2.** 52. Compare 1 Samuel **16.** 11, and **17.** 34, 35.
4. Early manhood. See Mark **6.** 3. Psalm **1.** Compare Genesis **39.**

The close of the thirty years is marked by the Baptism and the Temptation.

Matthew **3.** 13—**4.** 11. Mark **1.** 9-13. Luke **3.** 21—**4.** 14. John **1.** 15-18, 33.

II. The public ministry consists of four periods—

1. Contemporaneous with continuance of John's preaching.
   Luke **4.** 14, 15. John **3.** 29—**4.** 54.
2. During John's imprisonment.
   Matthew **4.** 12—**13.** 58. Mark **1.** 14—**6.** 13. Luke **5.** 1—**9.** 6. John **5.** 1-47.
3. From John's murder to the last journey.
   Matthew **14.** 13—**18.** 35. Mark **6.** 30—**9.** 50. John **6.** 1—**11.** 57.
4. The last journey to Jerusalem.
   Matthew **19.** 1—**27.** 44. Mark **10.** 1—**15.** 32. Luke **9.** 51-56, **13.** 22; **17.** 11—**23.** 43. John **12.** 1—**19.** 27.

Then came the end—

"He was cut off out of the land of the living,
For the transgression of My people was He stricken."

Character of the Johannean Narrative.

It will be observed that John not only records to a large degree different incidents from those contained in the other gospels, but that in particular he gives a fuller account of the first and third periods. The comparison of the four gospels does us at least this good service, that it gives a more extended view of the Life as a whole. We have already noted that in John we have the deeply interesting account of those early days when so quietly the Blessed Man of Psalm **1.**, being, as Luke tells us, thirty years of

age, commenced to bring forth His fruit in His season; whilst there, too, we have the abundant evidence that His leaf (communion with God) never withered, and whatsoever He did prospered.

In this passage, John **7.** 1—**10.** 42, we have, then, the continuation of the Johannean account of the third period; for John makes no mention of the Cæsarea Philippi episode of the transfiguration, nor of the story of the little child. Matthew, Mark and Luke, on the other hand, say nothing of this visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. Probably verse 1, "Jesus walked in Galilee," includes, in point, of time, Matthew, Mark and Luke's accounts of what followed the Great Desert Meal, for clearly it is a northward journey, a journey away from Jerusalem, that they record. But as to the period of Matthew **19.** and Mark **10.** we will speak later.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

John **7.** 37-52; **8.** 12-59.

How he went to the Feast.

An unworthy suspicion has intruded on some minds that the Lord's going up as it were in secret marked a want of courage, but it will be noted that in the midst of the Feast He went into the temple and taught. The point seems to be that His entry into the city was not public, but His presence there was. He went to teach. The time for His public entry was not yet come. The exact force of verse 8 we hesitate to refer to, because it is not quite certain whether the Lord said "I go not up." or "I go not up yet." If the former, the meaning might have been that He went not up as to a feast, but took occasion merely of the opportunity of the people being there to go up and teach them.

Note the reference to a sign of healing done on the Sabbath day. This was probably that of which we read in John **5.** which had been done in Jerusalem at a feast time.

Living Water.

On the last day, the great day of the Feast, which was the eighth day, a day of rest, the Lord stands and proclaims to those who still sought relief in shadows when the substance of all the types had come, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink," and then looking on away beyond the suffering and shame of the coming passover time, beyond the cross and the grave, onward to the glory when He would be seated on the Father's throne, He speaks of the Spirit to be given to all that believed in Him.

How significant, that in all these incidents the Apostles are left out of the picture!

Note that the Lord's birthplace had been forgotten; and God permitted this; there was no hint given to correct those who through unbelief had fallen into error. So also as to a further error, and we ask our readers to search and see whether even in the times of the Old Testament a prophet arose out of Galilee.

It does not appear that there is any sufficient evidence to justify the retention of the passage, John **7.** 53—**8.** 11. It is omitted, as the revisers tell us, in most of the ancient manuscripts and versions.

The Light of the World.

The Lord now speaks as the Light of the World, not of Israel only—"He that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." His life sheds light on our path if we follow Him. This following is double; firstly it is mental—it consists in tracing His life as portrayed in Scripture, watching His footsteps here below; secondly, it is actual, it consists in walking as He walked, and doing as He did.

Note the way in which the Lord Jesus couples Himself with the Father, "I and the Father that sent Me." Though teaching now, and uttering vital and imperishable truth, His words were virtually unheeded by the many, but some believed on Him.

Abraham's Seed.

It is a little difficult to understand what follows. Who answered in the words of verse 33? Those who believed? This seems impossible in the light of what follows.

The explanation seems to me to be that though the words of verses 31, 32 were especially addressed to believing ones that they might become truly disciples, the reply did not come entirely or chiefly from such. A believing one or two may have joined in the surprised question, but this came mainly from others; and the Lord's reply was addressed perhaps not chiefly (certainly not entirely) to individuals, but rather to the people as a whole. "My word hath not free course in you," appears to mean what the margin says, "hath no place in you," but this is not quite certain.

Note that though in one sense Abraham's seed, they were in another sense very different, and compare Paul's letter to Galatians. Observe, too, that as the conversation proceeds, the hostility of the opponents increase, or perhaps, rather, the more hostile supplant the others.

Finally, on His part we have the clear statement of His life before the Incarnation ; on their part, the futile attempt to stone Him. He hid Himself and went out, and as He passed by saw a blind man. Thus chapters **9.** and **10.** are very closely linked with chapters **7.** and **8.**

CHAPTER XXXVII.

John 9., 10.

Sight for the Blind.

The whole of chapter **9.** and chapter **10.**, at least to verse 21, if not to verse 39, are connected with one sign, which, with its accompanying teaching, is recorded by John with that perspicuity which characterizes his writing.

Our first note shall be that other afflictions besides this man's blindness are blessings in disguise, giving the afflicted one such an opportunity of knowing the works of God manifest in him as otherwise he had not had.

The Lord's giving of sight needed light; it could not be wrought in the night time—He in the world was the light, and it was day. The other Paraclete being here now it is still day; alas! for those who pass away in their blindness to the place of utter darkness, unillumined by a ray of Divine light, to that place and time of night when and where none can work the works of God.

This subject of divine grace was obedient, and came seeing. He will be found to be a more intelligent man altogether than the one who had lain at Bethesda, for his answers to the Pharisees compare very favourably with the Bethesdaite's in every respect. It was in vain, however, that he succeeded in winning a verbal triumph over them, for with them was authority, and they cast him out. But here again his misfortune, as it appeared to be, was the very occasion of his blessing. The Lord had previously seen him in passing, but now He looks for him and finds him and leads him into further light.

The scornful reply of the Pharisees to the words recorded in **9.** 39, gives occasion for the well-known teaching of chapter **10.** This is very important to notice, as it is so customary to read as if chapter **10.** verse 1, "Verily, verily," was the commencement of a subject or a section.

They who claimed to be disciples of Moses had so little regard for Moses' teaching that they cast out of their fold a man who had something to say for the Prophet like unto Moses who had come amongst them.

And here, perhaps first in this Gospel, the Lord shows Himself specially in His pastoral character. Because those who professed to be, as we should say, men of light and leading, manifested at this point so markedly their intolerance of one whose ways and words so shamed them, He now clearly states through a figure the true relationship of Himself and of them to the sheep of God.

He had entered in by the door, whilst they as thieves and robbers had climbed up some other way. He was the Shepherd of the sheep. To Him the Baptist had opened, and the once blind man, as an example, had, sheep-like, heard His voice. He had been called by his own name (which none knoweth save he that heareth), and this call was a call forth. To man it seemed that he had been put out, and this was true in one sense, but it was also true that the Lord had put him forth, and presently He would go before and lead those who know His voice.

They understood this not. How could they? Again, then, He speaks; this time as the door of the sheep by whom any may enter in and be saved, and come in and come out and find pasture.

But here further is He, as the Good Shepherd, contrasted with the thieves and robbers who were listening to Him, in that He laid down His life for the sheep at His Father's bidding.

(For notes on the One Flock see NEEDED TRUTH, volume **4.** page 26, and volume **15.** page 104.).

Then was manifested the truth of that which is written of the lights that God sets in the world that they may cause division between the light and the darkness.

THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION.

On the whole we are disposed to think that verses 22-39 refer to a later occasion; but we are far from certain. The connexion with the previous part of the chapter is very close, and the further teaching as to the sheep and their eternal security will of course be read in the light of verses 1 to 18.

This concludes with the vital statement of verse 30, "I and the Father are one." Evidently the Jews correctly understood the claim which is involved in these words. But blindly oblivious of its truth they sought to stone Him.

When asked why, they replied that He being a man made Himself God. The Lord's reply has been a difficulty to the present writer, as if it seemed to be a moderating of the previous claim. But I think the point is that the Jews were sceptical as to the possibility of the same person being at once man and God. How canst Thou evidently a man, be God? they ask. Now, it is a vital part of the revelation given in this Gospel that the Lord really was both. He therefore seeks to help them to the incomprehensible mystery of His incarnation by reference to the less matter, that created beings to whom the Word of God had come in a bygone day were addressed in the words "Ye are gods." If in any very limited sense they were called gods, how much more had He a claim, who not in part, but fully, did the works of the Father? This quoted scripture of the Old Testament is not used to substantiate His claim, but simply to show them their unreasonableness, and if it might be, help them to the truth.

Again then He goes away to the place beyond Jordan, where John was first baptizing, and there He abode; that is probably He stayed there for some long time. Many came and many believed on Him.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

John 11.

Mary Anoints the Lord's Feet.

Now a certain man was sick, we are told, who was the brother of that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment. This manner of introduction suggests that they to whom the Gospel came might likely have heard of Mary's anointing but not of the resurrection of Lazarus. The anointing, in point of fact, came later, as John **12.** makes plain, for there its exact date is fixed as six days before the Passover.

Matthew and Mark give a parenthetical account of this anointing in the **26**th and **14**th chapters respectively. After introducing the conspiracy to take Him privily, which was formed two days before the Passover, they go back to that incident which gave Satan his opportunity. For the kindly reproof of the Lord, which was a help against the sin of covetousness to those that were clean, only called forth opposition in the heart of the unregenerate Judas, who was provoked to fall deeper therein, whilst he bargained for thirty pieces of silver as the price of blood. Thus, God's time being come, the Devil was permitted to work, and the covetous Pharisees agreed to give what the equally covetous Judas asked, whilst he and they alike purchased for themselves endless shame and undying obloquy.

Matthew and Mark locate the anointing at the house of Simon the leper, where Martha, Lazarus and Mary made the supper. But who was Simon, and what was his relationship to this family? we cannot tell.[1] The anointing recorded in Luke **7.** 36-50, cannot be identified with this; it must have been another incident altogether. It is curious, however, that the host here was called Simon also; but then Simon seems to have been a common name among the Jews.

[1] Some one has suggested that Simon was a neighbour who was better off than Lazarus and his sisters, and hence likely to have had a more convenient house for such an occasion.

On the other hand the feast referred to in Matthew **26.** 6-13, Mark **14.** 3-9 and John **12.** 1-8, is mentioned in Luke **10.** 38-42 (see chapter XXXII.).

We have thus four accounts of the same incident, but with considerable differences, except that Matthew and Mark are much alike.

Matthew and Mark speak of the anointing of the head, but John, whose account is sympathetic in a high degree, mentions only the feet. The lowliness of Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet, is more deeply impressed on John, who himself lay in the bosom of the Lowly One. Thus he noticed the wiping of the feet with her hair, which reminds us of the other woman who was a sinner; and it is meant to remind us of this, for Mary was a sinner too, and knew it, though, unlike the woman of Luke **7.** 36-50, her sins she knew to be forgiven before the feast.

Matthew and Mark, however, are not to be regarded as inferior to John on this account, for the anointing, as recorded there, partakes of an official character. She anointed the head of the King and of Jehovah's most honoured Servant. Therefore they record the royal decree that the woman's act should be published as widely as the Gospel message. She paid a tribute of loyalty to the rejected King, she owned Jehovah's Servant as her Lord, and He accepted it, and honoured her.

But Luke only touches on the human side. Good, kind, worthy Martha made a mistake to be so anxious and troubled. To many a like woman to-day, in all her womanly energy, this word of gentle pleading correction is sent. May it not be in vain! Then we should not have kind wives and mothers spending the Lord's Day morning in cooking hot dinners for their husbands and sons when they might be at the Remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. For they could find abundant other time and opportunity for doing the service that belongs to them.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JOHN **11.** (*continued*).

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

REVERTING now to John **11.** we are again face to face with the exceeding reality of the Incarnation. Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Not only does Divine love embrace the world, it reaches to individuals, and it takes cognizance of family relationship. They had therefore sent saying, "He whom Thou lovest as a friend is sick." The word φιλέω philĕō, is used here in verse 3 as well as in verse 36. This word signifies that affection which is mutual, and implies some measure of intimacy. Hence the exceeding force of John **16.** 27, where it is twice used:—

"The Father Himself loveth you (that is, cherisheth you, is your friend) because ye have loved Me (that is cherished Me)." So, too, in John **21.** 15 to 18 where this word is used four times.

The more usual verb in the New Testament signifying to love is ἀγαπάω agapaō, the meaning of which is made clear in John **3.** 16, and 1 John **4.** 7-11. This word is used in the present chapter in the verse quoted above, John **11.** 5.

The Lord loved, but the Lord waited; His fruit was ever borne in its season; and this sickness was for the glory of God.

The disciples marvelled He should go where the Jews had so lately sought to stone Him; but the Lord's only care was to do the will of Him that sent Him. He therefore walked in the light and stumbled not. Compare John **1.** 5, 6, 7.

The word used of Lazarus in verse 11 "is fallen asleep." Κοιμάω, koimaō is frequently used of death, as for example in 1 Thessalonians **4.** 13, 15. It must be carefully distinguished from the very different word used in reference to

the daughter of Jairus (see chapter XXIV.). The Lord Jesus then said plainly, "Lazarus is dead," and when He came He found he had been buried for four days, and weeping and mourning had full place. Martha's faith reached to this, that the Lord could heal the sick. She had to learn a greater thing: "I am the Resurrection, and the Life," said the Lord. And in the scene portrayed we have a forecast of the early morning, when many shall hear His shout as He rises from the Father's throne with archangel voice and trump of God, and shall come forth as Lazarus did. And yet not as Lazarus, for instead of being bound in grave-clothes the dead in Christ will be endued with incorruption; and unlike Martha and Mary who in mortal bodies welcomed their brother back to life, the living in Christ shall in the morning of the day of Christ put on immortality. For the Lord Himself has now been raised, and He has immortality, and He is incorruptible, Who is the first fruits that in all things He might have pre-eminence.

But here at the grave of Lazarus He is manifested to be Son of God by His power to raise the dead. See Romans **1.** 4, R.V., and compare the pregnant words of Paul to Agrippa and to Festus (see Acts **26.** 2-8, 23, 26, 27, R.V.).

Why with all this before Him then did the Lord groan in His spirit? Was it at the exceeding slowness of His beloved ones; the little confidence they had in Him? And wherefore did He weep? Was it the heartfelt sympathy for those who had lost their beloved brother?

There was sorrow, and there was unbelief; but with Him was power. Many then believed on Him; but not all, for some went away as mischief-makers.

Resurrection of Lazarus Excites Hatred—Conspiracy Brooding.

And then began to brood that conspiracy which presently was to be such a dread success. And even now the reality of God's relationship to His own people is manifest at the time when they are so far distant. For at the very outset of this plot God Himself causes the High Priest to utter a prophecy pregnant with Divine truth, telling that One was to die for the nation, and more, that in direct opposition to

the false ideas of sanctity that the rulers of Israel had, it was the Divine purpose, by the death of Christ, to gather into His name the children of God that are scattered abroad.

And yet he who thus prophesied, and they who heard, cared nothing for God and His will, but only sought to effect their murderous devices of evil.

But the hour, though now approaching, had not come, and therefore again for a term the Lord departs; and they plot mischief against Him. But still they cannot lay hands on Him till His own familiar friend, in whom He trusted, resents the well deserved reproof that his greed called forth, and hastening to his doom proves indeed that the way of transgressors is hard.

CHAPTER XL.

Matthew 19. 1-12; Mark 10. 1-12; Luke 17. 11-19.

The Last Journey to Jerusalem.

Our consideration of John **11.** has necessarily led us to look, somewhat prematurely perhaps, at John **12.** and the parallel scriptures, and thus to anticipate the natural course of the narrative. Returning now to the other three Gospels we have to observe the manner in which Matthew and Mark introduce the final journey. To and fro between Judæa and Galilee He has travelled again and again in these days of His ministry, as in earlier days He had gone backwards and forwards between the carpenter's shop and the synagogue, where the roll of the law was to be read. Neither then nor now had He wearied of His work; too true, too steadfast, too faithful a servant of His God was He for that. But as the time had come when the work of the carpenter's shop was at an end, and He left it for the last time, so now on His last journey He departed from Galilee. It is true that as the One raised from among the dead He went again to Galilee, but only to be seen by a few. So too as the glorified One He again revisits the workshop wherever a carpenter can be found (or other workman) who earnestly desires His presence in the daily round of common duties.

Matthew **19.** 1 connects the departure from Galilee with the fact that the teaching of Matthew **18.** had been finished. Compare here Ecclesiastes **3.** 1-8.

Both Matthew and Mark dismiss the journey as far as the border of Judæa in a sentence. But Luke describes an important incident that occurred as they were entering a certain village in Galilee or Samaria (as only one of the lepers was a Samaritan, and he is called a stranger, it was probably a Galilean village). There is, I think, great sig-

nificance in the fact that whilst all ten lepers got what they asked for, even mercy, he who returned and gave thanks was more exceedingly blessed in grace. All were cleansed, but he was not only cleansed, he received from the Lord's own lips the assurance of salvation, that is, of healing in a fuller and wider sense. We are apt sometimes to speak lightly or ask as to a person being saved, when what is meant comes far short of what is meant in the word of God by salvation.

Reverting to Matthew and Mark we are brought to the borders of Judæa, where multitudes followed Him, and came together unto Him. He healed them, and He taught them. Note the difference in wording between Matthew and Mark; the meaning of some differences is very clear, that of others is less so.

Pharisees came to Him and asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The Lord's reply is fraught with most important instruction. He answers them by reference to that which was written. "Have ye not read?" was His inquiry. He magnified the Law and made it honourable, for He based what He said on what was to be found in the book of the Law, namely, to be particular, in what we call Genesis, chapter **1.**, verse 27, and chapter **2.**, verse 24. Therein firstly is recorded in **1.** 27, that Elohim created man in His own image, and created him male and female; secondly, the manner in which the woman was made from the man's rib is described in **2.** 21-23. So that the first man and woman were made out of one flesh, and because of this it becomes a man who takes a wife to himself, to cleave unto her, leaving for her both his father and his mother, that he and she may not be any longer two but may become one flesh. God having joined them thus together by His word, man may not put them asunder.

The scriptures before us in Matthew **19.** 3-12, and Mark **10.** 2-12, are of great importance in their bearing on the relationship that exists between the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and that of the earliest of the sacred writings.

However great and good the Lord Jesus Christ was, however kind to man and devoted to God, if, as some

falsely teach, He were but a man of human origin, whose beginnings date from Mary's womb, His reference to these scriptures as authoritative in their teaching, and as truthfully recording that which took place at the beginning, would have had little or no more value than that of any other teacher of men. But if, as the Gospels most clearly teach, He was the Eternal Word, the One without Whom no thing was made; if His life on earth was that of One Who could truthfully say, "Before Abraham was, I am," then His use of the Old Testament Scriptures is of necessity of deepest significance as to their character.

For the issue is plain, the parting of the ways is here: Was the Lord Jesus Christ (the Man of Sorrows of twenty centuries ago), was He the Eternal One or no? Had He or had He not means to know the truth as to what was written in Genesis **1.** or **2.**? If any doubt this, alas for him!

Doubts and difficulties over doctrines, albeit they are doctrines of the Holy Scripture, are one thing, but alas for him who hath not faith in Christ! Woe, woe is to the man who believeth not in Him as the great I AM, for so dying a man, howsoever good he be, dies in his sin, and in his sins (see John **8.** 21. 24. R.V., note margin).

We speak to those who believe in Him, and we ask what value is this faith if it allow us to think He could err? Could He err by ignorance? Could He mislead by design? Could He? Perish the thought!

We further look at this passage to note the positive and unmistakable way in which the Lord proclaims the sanctity and permanence of the marital tie. The provision that Moses had been bidden to make was a provision for hard hearts. Else nothing could break the bond save only fornication. That is to say, if the obligations of faithfulness which marriage imposes equally on both are disregarded by one, this and this alone will serve as a ground for the dissolution of the bond, and act as death acts in breaking the legal tie and liberating from its obligations.

Need we say that neither death nor fornication necessarily destroy that higher and holier, that deeper and more lasting reality of which marriage is or should be but the

expression and the embodiment. We refer of course to that true love which can only exist in its highest form between those who knowing God and His Son and being taught by His Spirit have been mutually attracted by and to each other, he to cherish her, she to reverence him, and both giving God His first place in all things and most of all in this, to be first in heart, then in flesh one, as Christ and the Church are. Such love even death cannot destroy. Happy, thrice happy, they who know it, be their trials and troubles what they may!

CHAPTER XLI.

MATTHEW **19.** 13—**20.** 16 ; MARK **10.** 13-31 ; LUKE **17.** 20—**18.** 30

LITTLE CHILDREN ENTERING THE KINGDOM.

WHILST the disciples were trying to accept the difficult teaching of the Lord as to marriage, some mothers came along with their little children. How significant to notice that though the disciples could not readily come down to such small things, the Lord could! Here and now comes the teaching not inferior in its importance to that of the preceding passage—"Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God," as Mark records. To know the rule of God in the heart there is nothing more important than to become like a little child.

The same is true of the Kingdom of the Heavens. In this realm, the Kingdom of the Heavens, where the Heavens do rule, there are many who are in no sense children. But the children are the King's especial care; and whilst the mighty men of this world war and contend, they who are as little children may take things easy and have no care; for He that is higher than the highest careth for them. It seems to us that these two scriptures, recording what the Lord said in two different forms, are the complements of each other. Mark refers to that which is within: God ruling in the heart. The rule of God may be, and is, especially effectual in the hearts of little children of all ages, see Psalm **131**. Matthew refers to what is without: where the heavens rule, all things are overruled for the good of little children.

THE YOUNG RULER'S REQUEST AND THE LORD'S ANSWER.

Then as He was going on His way comes the ruler who wished to inherit eternal life. Compare the three accounts. How careful he had been as to what he did not do. Note that the Lord in answer to his "Which?" recounted the commandments manward and their summary, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." These and this he had, so he said, observed from his youth up. Perhaps so, but if he had loved his neighbour as well as himself he had loved

him no better. It needs love from God, that goes back to God, to make a man do this. And when love to God was tested by the command to sell all and follow the One who for our sakes had become poor, it was too much for him. What is the connexion between this and "Suffer little children"? Of such is the Kingdom, but it is hard for a rich man to enter into it.

Peter was glad evidently that he had not been too rich. He had given up boats and nets and the like, and what should he benefit? Peter on a later day would not have asked this kind of question; for he learnt later about an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, that he would scarcely have thought only a reward for giving up an old wooden boat and some tackle! On the contrary, the exceeding great promises demanded that with all diligence in faith virtue should be added, and something else therein, until at last love being added one would cease to be blind and would learn to look a little further than to the forsaken nets on the sea of Galilee (see 1 Peter **1.** 3-12, and 2 Peter **1.** 1-11).

Well, now again, about these wages. Is it wise always to be a good hand at a bargain? Likely enough eightpence halfpenny was worth having for a day's work; I am sure it was fair. But I wonder how much the third hour and sixth hour and ninth hour men got? The one hour workers got their denarius apiece without a bargain, and it may be as well for us to trust the Lord about all these crowns and things that are coming when the day of reward arrives.

Some Parables Peculiar to Luke.

The passage Luke **17.** verses 20-21 deserves particular notice. When these words were spoken we are not told. The following verses record what Matthew tells of in chapter **24.** The parable of the unjust judge is peculiar to Luke, so is that of the Pharisee and the publican; the former prayed with himself, the latter looked for propitiation and obtained more; for he was justified. And it is the goodness of God in reaching to publicans which Luke sets forth as extended to babes. For all these incidents in this Gospel precede the bringing of the babes and the coming of the Ruler.

CHAPTER XLII.

MATTHEW **20.** 17-34; MARK **10.** 32-52; LUKE **18.** 31—**19.** 28.

ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM.

THE Lord now starts for Jerusalem, and the twelve follow Him, amazed and afraid. He calls them to Him and tells them plainly what was about to befall Him. But they understood not. Here, in particular, a comparison of the three Gospels is most helpful. Matthew shows that others followed Him beside the twelve, for He took them apart. Mark tells of their fear and amazement before He spoke. Luke tells of their lack of perception. Luke thus helps us to understand Matthew and Mark without being unduly severe on Zebedee's wife and sons; though their want of sympathy was very sad, there was not that heartlessness that might at first appear. It is fair, too, to remember that John who wished to be on the left hand in the Kingdom lay in His bosom whilst on earth. James had the honour of being the first apostle to follow the Lord out of this world, and perhaps lonely John of the Patmos isle revelation was the last. Anyhow, when He saw the Lord in His glory he fell at His feet, which was far better than to sit on His left hand.

Then the ten come into view with their indignation. What a silly lot of men these apostles were, we might say, if we were not so much like them. But even in present days it is not altogether unknown, even in the Community of which Christ is Lord, that rulers should seek to lord it over their fellows. We have not yet quite perfectly learned the way to become great. For it is no bad ambition to wish to be great. No, indeed! for the Lord tells us how—He tempts us to that true greatness in which He was and is so great an adept. He came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. And how great is He? Ah, how great indeed! God hath highly exalted Him. So then if we would be great be it ours to serve, and

this in both senses. Let Him be your minister, that is, your ministering servant, your deacon . . . shall be your servant, your bondservant, your slave. See the Revised Version with its margin.

So then they get to Jericho, and deeply significant is the history of Jericho in this connexion. He gave His life a ransom for many, and they came to Jericho, the place of sin, builded in disobedience and revolt against God. He came there, and they with Him.

Compare the Gospels; note the seeming contradictions of "as they went out" and "as He drew nigh." First thank God for them, and then ponder them and praise God again. It is comely; praise is comely.

"As he drew nigh," says Luke, "a certain blind man heard" and made inquiries. "As He went forth," says Matthew (whether finally on the Jerusalem journey, or just for a walk, as we should say, is not clear) there are two blind men sitting waiting, and they cry to Him who never refused the needy in their need.

Bartimæus Son of Timæus.

Mark tells us explicitly that they first came to Jericho, and as He went out this Bartimæus, son of Timæus, sat there and cried. Only one man is told of here, and he is mentioned by name. The Perfect Servant knows the names of every one for whom He came. This name was written in heaven. Then note the persistence, the determination, spite of the bullying crowds who would have closed his mouth. But he receives his sight, and is saved. "Go thy way," says the Lord. He went his way, but that was the Lord's way, for he followed Him. So did they both.

Zacchæus Up in a Tree.

Then Jericho has another tribute, for as they pass through, little Zacchæus up in a tree hears the welcome word "Come down," and down he comes quicker than he went up, and has the honour of entertaining the Lord as another publican had done before. But he was lost till he was found, and thus his being lost is the Lord's justification for saving him. Are any wise? If so let this word suffice.

Then Luke makes plain that whilst the twelve had not understood the Lord's word as to His passion, they had become reconciled to the Jerusalem journey, supposing that there would be an immediate manifestation of His power.

Parable of the Ten Pounds.

Hence the parable of the ten pounds, which must not be confounded with the parable of the ten talents. In this present parable ten servants get a pound apiece. Every one has the same to start with, as each of us have one life, or as each has one heart, or as each has one spirit. But, to return, one gets by trading ten pounds and another five pounds, and these get ten cities and five cities respectively. But now comes one who has done nothing. He has wrapped up the pound and taken oh! such care of it—and care of himself, too, for he has done no work. He is reproached as a wicked servant; he returned the lord his pound, but what about the labour that was due from him? The pound therefore itself he may not have, but it is given to one who had better known its value and its use. What care some people take to make no mistakes! hence they do nothing, which is itself a great mistake. These, too, be it noted, are to be carefully distinguished from the enemies.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MATTHEW **21.** 1-22; MARK **11.** 1-25; LUKE **19.** 29-48; JOHN **12.** 1-50.

THE KING COMETH.

THE parallelism of the four Gospels becomes more marked as we approach the end. All describe the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. John tells us that it was immediately preceding this that the memorable supper was served to Him in the house of Simon the leper by Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

The δειπνον (*dĕipnŏn*, *supper*, see chapter XXXIII.) was an evening meal, but there would probably have been plenty of time afterwards for the coming of the Jews, who came not for His sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.

The chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death. Note the word "also." They had, we thus see, made up their minds to the greater crime.

On the morrow then the Lord makes His triumphal entry. By careful comparison of the Gospels with a map before one (No. 9 *environs* at end of Oxford Revised Bible) it seems clear that the Lord spent the night at Bethany, that in the morning He started west, and when He reached Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, He sent into the village (Bethphage?) for the she ass and her foal, and as He rode into Jerusalem He was met by the multitudes crying "Hosanna." Hosanna means "Save us," and little could they know at what cost ere the week was over He would accomplish His Great Salvation.

But here the meekness of the King is the subject, and Matthew, Mark, Luke, who say nothing here of the tarrying at Bethany, all tell us how He sent for the ass (blessed amongst beasts!) who was to bear the Divine and Royal Burden into the city. The minor differences of the four accounts deserve attention:—

Mark and Luke speak of a young colt on which no one had yet sat, which was to be brought. This colt was a male, the masculine article and pronoun being used in Mark and Luke frequently. Thus in Mark: . . . a colt tied, on whom (ἐφ ὅν, eph hŏn, masculine) . . . loose him (αὐτὸν, autŏn, masculine) . . . he will send him (αὐτὸν) . . . they loose him (αὐτὸν) . . . loosing the colt (τὸν πῶλον, tŏn pōlŏn, tŏn is masculine . . . bring the colt (τὸν) . . . He sat upon him (αὐτὸν). Luke is similar.

But Matthew, recording the King's birth, tells of His mother, so Matthew tells of the ass who was the mother of the colt. The Lord sent for the ass and for her colt; "a colt with her" (μετ' αὐτῆς, mĕt' autēs, feminine).

Moreover the Lord had need of the mother ass as well as of the colt (see verse 3). And many a mother who is bringing up a troublesome lad may be helped by remembering that though, as Zophar said,

"Man is born as a wild ass's colt,"

"THE LORD HATH NEED OF HIM" (Mark and Luke); and He the King born of a woman never forgets the mothers of His servants, for "THE LORD HATH NEED OF THEM"—that is, mother and son both (Matthew). He did not apparently ride on the mother ass, though the disciples spread their garments over her as well as over the colt. For whilst the ass of Matthew **21**. 2 is feminine that of verse 5 line 3.

"Meek, and riding upon an ass,"

has no mark of gender. Line 4 reads,

And upon a colt the son of a beast of burden.

This word beast of burden [1] is another word for ass, used also in 2 Peter **2.** 16.

The lines 3 and 4 of verse 5 have that parallelism that characterizes Hebrew poetry. They do not give two statements but one statement in a two-fold form.

Hence we conclude that the actual service was done by the foal, the son, but in doing this service he was not separated from his mother, either in fact or in the Lord's thoughts.

Thus Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory, the King of Israel, entered into Jerusalem in glory and meekness. The joy

[1] In the original Greek. (J.C.R.)

and pleasure of the disciples ascended acceptable to God in heaven, though it vexed the Pharisees sadly.

Then as He drew still nearer to the city He wept—it is Luke that tells us this. Richly did the city deserve the worst that was to befall it, but the Son of Man wept over its coming woe.

The Last Week.

We may at this stage seek what light is to be obtained as to the order of that which took place during the week that preceded the sacrifice of our Passover.

We shall for definiteness suppose, without at this point giving reasons or stating it dogmatically, that the crucifixion took place on the day of the week that we call Thursday.

We gather then from Matthew **26.** 1, 2 (and following verses), that it was on the day now called Tuesday that the Lord spake to His disciples the words recorded in Matthew **24.** and **25.** (also in Mark **13.** and Luke **21.** 5-36).

The discourse (for it is manifestly one discourse) commenced with a response to a question that was asked by the disciples (Matthew **24.** 3, Mark **13.** 3, Luke **21.** 7), as He sat on the Mount of Olives, evidently in the evening of the day, and this question arose out of the conversation briefly recorded in Matthew **24.** 1, 2; Mark **13.** 1, 2; Luke **21.** 5, 6, which took place as He left the temple.

In the temple, as we suppose that same day, He had first encountered the opposition of the chief priests and elders and put them to silence (Matthew **21.** 23—**22.** 46; Mark **11.** 27—**12.** 37; Luke **20.** 1—44).

Then He had spoken plainly to the multitudes as to these scribes and Pharisees (Matthew **23.** 1-39; Mark **12.** 38-40; Luke **20.** 45-47). His observation of the treasury followed and then He went out.

Again, it was on this day that the chief priests and Pharisees had sought to lay hold on Him but feared to do so (Matthew **21.** 45, 46; Mark **12.** 12; Luke **20.** 19). They had sought in vain to catch Him in talk, and they were baffled.

On this day (which we reckon to be Tuesday) the chief priests and elders were gathered and took counsel as to

taking the Lord by subtilty, and to them comes poor Judas, who had taken offence a few days back at the Bethany supper (Matthew **26.** 1-5, 14-16; Mark **14.** 1, 2, 10, 11; Luke **22.** 1-6).

We go back again to the beginning of this fateful Tuesday and the days immediately precedent. If we err not, the supper at Bethany being six days before the Passover (whilst what we call Tuesday was two days before it) must have been on the Sabbath day, and the entry into Jerusalem would have been on the first day of the week.

We are now in a position to consider and compare Matthew **21.** 12-22 with Mark **11.** 11-25, two passages which appear on careful reading to offer some difficulty as to the order of events. To overcome this difficulty it is wise to consider separately the two questions. Did the purification of the temple take place on the day of the triumphal entry? On what day was the fig tree cursed?

Supposing then the triumphal entry to have been on the first day, and the third day to be that to which Matthew **21.** 23, Mark **11.** 27, Luke **20.** 1, refer, we incline to believe that the purification of the temple took place on the intervening day. This appears to be plainly stated by Mark, and though verse 12 of Matthew **21.** follows verse 11 closely, this in no way shows that no day intervened. Again it seems more probable that the demand for the Lord's authority by the chief priests and elders should follow the next day after the purification than that a day should intervene.

The fig tree being cursed immediately withered, so Matthew says distinctly, but the disciples did not notice it till the next morning, so Mark plainly asserts. This involves no contradiction at all.

It seems plain that the Lord's words as to believing prayer were on what we are calling the Tuesday morning, whilst the actual cursing and withering of the tree were on the day previous.

The Narrative in John.

It is interesting to compare or rather contrast John **12.** 20-50, with the scriptures just mentioned. Perhaps these words belong to a very early period in the week, such as

the first or second day. But at any rate they are marked by a great difference in character from the utterances recorded by the other evangelists.

The parable of the grain of wheat, the words as to saving or losing the life and much else are deeply significant and characteristic. Here too the Lord is seen to depart from unbelieving ones, as we do not see in Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Note also the reminiscence of the John **1.** story, where Andrew and John are called and then fetch their brothers, and Philip calls Nathanael. For here Philip and Andrew too are named as bringing others to the Lord.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MATTHEW **21.** 23—**22.** 46 ; MARK **11.** 27—**12.** 37 ; LUKE **20.** 1-44.

IN THE TEMPLE.

WE now reach what we suggest is the account of the Tuesday (as we should call it) immediately preceding the Crucifixion. It closes with the words, "After two days the passover cometh." It divides itself into three parts :—

The controversy with the chief priests and others in the temple.

The words spoken afterwards to the multitude, also in the temple.

The Lord's words to His disciples after He went out.

We at present confine ourselves to the first.

The chief priests now demand His authority for what He did (the purification of the temple being very likely the main ground of attack).

He replies by a question as to John, which goes to the root of matters, and proves their utter insincerity—they were weighed in the balances and found wanting.

Then comes the parable of the two sons, given only by Matthew, and then the parable of the vineyard, given by the three gospels.

They would then have taken Him, but feared to do so. He then gives the parable of the King's feast (Matthew only). Then back come Pharisees and Herodians to catch Him in His talk. They fail, and the Sadducees, come, who also have their trap, which is likewise in vain.

The sidelights from these incidents are invaluable. Note for example that the sceptics of those days quoted from Deuteronomy as a record of what Moses said. Of course their testimony would not of itself be adequate proof that Moses wrote Deuteronomy. But it is instructive, if we

would not be ignorant of Satan's devices, to observe how much further he has got the higher critics, as they are called, of the present day in his great lesson,

HATH GOD SAID?

For probably the majority of the parsons of professing Christendom would be insulted at the idea that they accepted Moses as the writer of Deuteronomy (see 2 John 9).

Then come the Pharisees with their questions—but note that amongst them is a young man whom they made their spokesman perhaps, but who was not altogether corrupt.

Then all were silenced, and especially when He asked the further question, "David calleth Him Lord, how is He his Son?"

How, indeed? we may well ask—

> But the high mysteries of His Name
> An angel's grasp transcend,
> The Father only—glorious claim—
> The Son can comprehend.

CHAPTER XLV.

MATTHEW **23.**, **24.**, **25.**; MARK **12.** 38—**13.** 37; LUKE **20.** 45—**21.** 38.

SEVEN WOES PRONOUNCED ON WICKED MEN.

PERHAPS the scribes and Pharisees, or many of them, had now gone out. At any rate they were silenced, and the Lord turns to the multitudes and to His disciples with the deeply important words with which Matthew **23.** commences. Whilst these men continued to sit on Moses' seat their reading and exposition of the law demanded attention. But the One, who had ever given them their due place, now with all the more effect tears aside the veil of their hypocrisy and exposes them in all their naked deformity. Seven woes are then pronounced upon these wicked men. These deserve the most solemn attention of all who seek to teach or lead others. For terrible as is the list of their misdeeds—

1. They were like the dog in the manger of the homely fable;

2. Zealously they sought to make others worse than themselves;

3. They were thrice blind;

4. Their chief care was for things of least importance;

5. They acquired by extortion what they consumed in excess;

6. Hypocrisy and iniquity filled them;

7. Murder was their hereditary occupation—

each count of the terrible indictment but marks the goal to which the great Adversary is seeking to lead all those who are not found in the first three verses of the first Psalm.

Upon such a generation, then, the justice which characterizes the kingdom of heavens would assuredly bring down dire judgments.

None the less the cup of fury that Jerusalem was about to drink gave deepest sorrow to her Lord and King.

The thirty-nine verses of Matthew **23.** are represented by only three in Mark and in Luke. But in both of these the condemnation of those who made great professions is deepened by the contrast with the poor widow who cast in all that she had.

> Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
> Vainly with gifts would His favour secure;
> Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
> Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

The prophecy of Haggai had been fulfilled; the Lord Himself, great David's greater Son, had come to the House of God and conferred on it in its latter days a glory that the days of Solomon never knew (Haggai **2.** 9, R.V.). But He was rejected; the rulers whom He had silenced hated Him and plotted His death. There destruction must needs befall that temple and city; and when His disciples enthusiastically claimed His admiration for such manner of stones and such manner of buildings He turned to foretell its utter downfall.

Then as on each of these evenings He turns His steps away from the city (Mark **11.** 19, Luke **21.** 37); and as He reaches the Mount of Olives He sits Him down there and looks towards the doomed temple, and while He looks there come Peter and James and John and Andrew and seek privately to hear more of the dread story of coming woe.

Into the details of these passages we shall not now enter. But we point out how full the account is in Matthew compared with that in Mark and Luke, for it is in Matthew that the thread of Divine dealings with Israel is continued most markedly.

But note that both Matthew and Mark witness that the Lord names Daniel the prophet as the one who had long ago predicted that the abomination of desolation should stand where it ought not.

And here the times foretold by Daniel the prophet are taken account of. The tribulation is mentioned and the shortening of the days for the sake of the elect remnant.

Again it is as the Son of Man (in the third person) that the Lord speaks of His coming again to this earth with signs and wonders accompanying His advent.

All of this is in the sharpest contrast to the intensely personal character of the Lord's words on the following evening as recorded in John **14.**

When the signs and wonders of Matthew **24.** and Mark **13.** and Luke **21.** have reached their climax, the Son of Man shall be seen to come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven, yea, from one end of heaven to the other, shall His elect be gathered by angels, with a great sound of a trumpet.

In contrast to this, when God shall bring with Jesus those that have been put to sleep through Him, the Lord shall descend Himself with a shout, with archangel voice, with the Trump of God.

This shout of the Son of God with His archangel voice, with the Trump of God, will be heard by the dead in Christ and the living in Christ. After this no more will any die in Christ (though many will die in the Lord). For it is the special prerogative of the Son of God to gather unto Himself in the air by means of His own shout with His own archangel voice those who constitute the Church whom He will present to Himself in glory.

[Some further notes on the important difference between the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the air for His Church and His coming to the earth as Son of Man with angels will be found in the commencement of volume **2** of NEEDED TRUTH. Reference may also be made to "The Lord's Second Coming, in two Aspects," by the late Mr. F. A. Banks (SPIRITUAL GROWTH, pages 76-85).]

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES DISCOURSE.

Matthew's account of this Mount of Olives discourse is notable for—

1. The fig tree parable (given also by Mark and Luke).
2. The likeness to the days of Noah.
3. The parable of the ten virgins.
4. The parable of the talents.
5. The judgment of the living nations, likened to sheep and goats.

All these are in their primary application definite in their reference to the coming to the earth of the Son of Man. But they teem with moral teaching of uttermost importance, from which all at all times may learn who will. We may note that though only the first of these parables is given by Mark and by Luke, they add thereto words connected with the other similitudes.

In Mark **13.**, for instance, compare verse 34 with Matthew **25.** verse 14, though verses 35-37 seem rather parallel to **Matthew 24.** 43, 44.

The comparison of these passages would be very interesting, but time and space and something else fail.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Matthew 26. 1-30; Mark 14. 1-26; Luke 22. 1-24.

Nearing the Great Sacrifice.

That we are now quite close to the Great Sacrifice is clearly stated in the opening words of Matthew **26.** and Mark **14.** and Luke **22.** And these make clear that at the time the Lord was speaking to His disciples in the words we have been just considering the chief priests and scribes were conspiring how to put Him to death without causing an uproar. Then the account of the treachery of Judas Iscariot is in Matthew and Mark preceded by a brief mention of the Bethany supper, evidently introduced to explain the immediate occasion of his dastardly act.

The Last Passover Kept by the Lord.

We pass on to the passover supper kept by the Lord. The accounts of this in the four gospels have many points of difference deserving earnest consideration, and to some of these we will direct attention.

When evening came, as Matthew and Mark tell us, He came and was sitting with the twelve. But Luke says that when the hour was come He sat down. The interest of these expressions is enhanced by the fact that John **18.** 28 makes plain that the punctilious chief priests and elders and Pharisees had not eaten the passover the following morning.

In spite of certain difficulties involved in the interpretation the present writer understands the commandment of the Lord, therefore, in Exodus **12.** 6 to be, as the margin gives it, between the two evenings—that is, between two sunsets.

The Lord Himself and the twelve with Him killed and ate the passover, we understand, immediately after sunset on what we should call Wednesday, whilst the rulers of Israel left it till close on the following sunset.

Then it was still between the evenings—that is, before the sunset of Thursday—that Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For it was between noon and about 3 o'clock that darkness overshadowed the whole land (or the whole earth), and at the ninth hour that He uttered the cry—

"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
"My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"

To return to the evening in the upper room, we understand "when the hour was come" to indicate the fulfilment of the words—

"I made haste, and delayed not,
To observe Thy commandments."

This we suggest is the clue to the interpretation likewise of the words, "Upon the first day of the week" in Acts **20**. It might also be useful as a hint to folks living say five minutes from a meeting-place who never start more than five minutes before the hour of meeting.

As to the order of what took place in the upper room, we think that the dipping of the sop marks a notable point, and that Luke does not observe the order of events.

If this be so, after the supper had commenced the first recorded incident is the feet washing of John **13.** 1-20.

Then follow the troubling of His spirit foretold in Psalm **55**—

"My heart is sore pained within Me.

* * *

But it was thou, a man Mine equal,
My companion, and My familiar friend;"

* * *

after which He gave the sign that He knew the heart of that wretched man, who was hasting to his doom, his hands red with innocent blood.

Perhaps immediately after follows that of which we read in Matthew **26.** 26-29 and Mark **14.** 22-25. We will refer to the account in Luke later. The accounts in Matthew and in Mark seem to us to be distinctly historical in character. Matthew, let us say, records what took place as it then presented itself and was meant to present itself to him. Calvary, however little they entered into it, was their horizon. If He were to die, they could think of nothing beyond that.

Confining ourselves then to the accounts given through Matthew and Mark, we read that He took a loaf and blessed and brake it and gave to them. So far we have that which was characteristic of Him, that which He had often done. But this loaf was not like other loaves; it was a symbol, for as He gave to them He said, "Take, eat; this is My body." He as He spoke was yet in the body. The symbol pointed on to the morrow, when He was to die, when the body which God had prepared for Him was to be nailed to the cross—when He was to give His flesh for the life of the world. And now in symbol it behoved these representative men to take from His outstretched hand that which represented His body to be given up, life for life, ere the sun again set.

Peter was there, type of earnest and often misguided men who take the sword to serve the Lord when He calls for service of a far different character; type too of those who, being restored after a fall from self-confidence, are all the better able to strengthen their brethren. James too was there, type of the noble army of martyrs, slain with the sword; John in like manner, the one who knew the Lord's love; Andrew the representative of brother-bringers; Nathanael the guileless one, and Philip who called him. There too was Thomas, who was naturally of a sceptical disposition, but learnt to believe anything possible; and besides these were those whose names were written indeed, but of whom we know little beyond the name.

But Judas Iscariot, the empty professor, was not there, for the eleven men to whom the Lord said, "Take, eat; this is My body," did so as representative of all in every day and every clime who receive life from God because of the manifold and infinitely precious worth of the Great Atoning Sacrifice.

This taking and eating by these eleven men, then, stands unique, in its far-reaching significance telling of life received from the One who died.

He took a cup also and gave thanks and gave to them. Not the first time He poured out wine indeed, but this cup spoke of the blood He was about to shed—blood of the new covenant, shed not for them only, but for many. For many, but for how many? Ah! who can tell? The Great

White Throne alone will reveal the countless myriads who, in addition to the Old Testament worthies, to the Church of this time, to those who die in the Lord hereafter, shall with the myriads of infant dead all cry "Worthy, worthy, worthy!" And then will it be true—

Around the throne of God in Heaven
Myriads of myriads stand,
Myriads whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy happy band,
Singing Glory, Glory, Glory.

It is not, let us in particular point out, any ceremony of human device or human corruption—like, for example, the superstition of infant sprinkling (misnamed christening)—that does an infant any good. The welfare of the infant dead lies in this; that the Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood for the remission of sins.

But of this cup He drank not Himself. In connexion with the passover very probably He had drunk—but for Him there waited a cup of bitter woe, and for the fruit of the vine He waits till He shall drink it new in His Father's kingdom.

Luke gives an account very different in many details from that of Matthew and Mark. The first point we shall note is the place of verses 17, 18. The latter words, "I will not drink . . . kingdom of God shall come," we understand to be what Matthew and Mark place at the very end (Matthew **26.** 29, Mark **14.** 25), and we suppose therefore that Luke, for a reason which we cannot surmise, is referring in verse 17 to the cup again mentioned in verse 20; but we are not certain.

Then in verse 19, "This do in remembrance of Me," are words spoken by the Lord that Matthew and Mark do not give, and this, as we believe, for the simple reason that that which belonged to our wilderness journey beyond the cross was no part of the picture that it lay with them to present.

But Luke, writing for Gentile believers perhaps especially, gives the Lord's words providing for a lasting memorial of Himself, in that His disciples after His departure were to do collectively as He had done Himself, and doing this to bring Him to remembrance, namely by taking a loaf, giving thanks for the same, and breaking it before eating.

But of this and its exact relationship to 1 Corinthians **11.** this is not the time or place to speak particularly.

Then we learn from verse 20 that as the bread was broken so the cup was poured out. This is plain from the words—

τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον
tŏ hupĕr humōn ekchhunŏmĕnŏn
the for you poured out,

where the article and participle agree with

Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον
tŏutŏ tŏ potēriŏn
this the cup,

and not with τῷ αἵματί μου
tō haimati mŏu
the blood of Me.

That is, whilst Matthew and Mark speak of the blood being poured out (or shed) for many—that is, the real thing, the effectual outpouring of the blood for remission—Luke speaks of the symbol—that is, of the cup (meaning, of course, the wine), which cup was poured out from one vessel into another.

Luke, moreover, for a moral reason gives after the bread and cup that which referred to the traitor—evidently, I think, because all the eleven were by nature even as Judas, and this is hinted by the " also " which introduces verse 24. Even poor wretched Judas shows what is possible to the human heart—what is possible to such as me and you.

CHAPTER XLVII.

John 13., 14., 15., 16., 17.

These five chapters give us the account that John was inspired to write of the Lord's words on the evening of the betrayal. For the present we wish to consider them as a complete and coherent whole and not in their relation to the accounts of the same evening given through Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Bathed Men and Feet Washing.

The first thirty verses of chapter **13.** refer to the earlier part of the evening while Judas Iscariot was present. Our attention is especially directed to him in connexion with the feet washing. Firstly in verses 2 and 3, for note how closely the mention of the Devil's work in the heart of Judas is linked with the account of the Lord's acts; and especially further in verses 10 and 11, the Lord's knowledge of what one may perhaps call in a certain sense the uselessness of the washing of the feet of Judas Iscariot is markedly emphasized.

The eleven then were bathed men. "ὁ λελουμένος," hŏ lelŏuměnŏs, he that is bathed, literally the one having been bathed. The word has to do with an act which is thorough and complete and is quite different from the other word used in the same verse 10 and in verses 5, 6, 8 (twice), 12, 14 (twice) νίπτειν, niptein, to wash. A careful study of the passage makes the meaning clear to a great extent. Poor Judas had never been bathed. He had never received the word of the Lord into his heart, see **15.** 3. He had no personal, no experimental knowledge of the laver of regeneration (new birth, Titus **3.** 5) and no wetting of his feet could make him clean.

Then the Lord distinctly shows that in the washing of their feet He was setting an example to be followed. This is what all may do in their measure and according to their opportunity. It will be observed that it is recommended as a service of humility.

Then come the verses (already briefly alluded to in chapter XLVI.) recording His prediction of the betrayal and His indication of the traitor; they seemed to have little appreciation, however, of the force of His words.

The Departure of Judas and Subsequent Teaching of the Lord.

The departure of Judas the false friend was a relief to the Lord, to whom the pleasures of faithful friendship were ever dear; and He now commences to unburden Himself of those confidences which give to these chapters their extremely precious character. Perhaps it is Peter's interruption and the foretelling of his doleful fall that have led those to whom we owe the division into chapters to commence chapter **14.** where they do. But there is nothing that is like a beginning in the words, "Let not your heart be troubled," and so forth. It naturally follows on, firstly after the bad news for them that He was going where they could not go, and secondly it connects with the sad words to Peter. Peter would learn how little he could trust to himself, but he was to maintain his faith in the God whom his eyes could not see (compare also Luke **22.** 31, 32) and he was also to exercise faith in the One whom hitherto he had seen but who was about to go where He could not be seen. We have thus, as it were, paraphrased the Lord's words, but it is right to point out that the abstract noun "faith" has little place in the writings of John; it is the verb "believe" that generally, as here, is used by him.[1]

Note the correct reading of **14.** 4 and the explanation that follows. It is difficult indeed to understand any sense in which they could be said to know the place to which He was going; but they certainly knew Him and thus knew the Way thither, for He is the Way. But further, He is the Truth, for He is the revelation of the Father. "He that hath seen Me," saith He, "hath seen the Father." He, too, is the Life; as such they heard, they saw with their eyes, they beheld, their hands handled Him (1 John **1.** 1).

[1]The only occurrences of the word πίστις, pistis, faith in John's writings are in 1 John 5. 4, and about four times in Revelation. The verb πιστεύω, pisteuō, to believe, occurs something like 100 times in the Gospel (but scarcely in Revelation at all).

But now that He was about to go beyond the reach of the bodily senses, He promised to send the other Paraclete who is the Spirit of Truth and, as we elsewhere learn, the Giver of life.

Note please that this blessed Divine Being is first spoken of in an emphatically personal manner as another Comforter or Advocate, *παράκλητος*, Paraklētŏs, that is another such as Himself. This proper name here applied to the Promised One is a word in the masculine gender with which agree:—*ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα*, ĕkeinŏs humas didaxei panta, He you shall teach all things (**14.** 26); *ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω*, hŏn ĕgō pĕmpsō, Whom I will send (**15.** 26); *ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει*, ĕkeinŏs marturēsei, He shall testify (**15.** 26); *πέμψω αὐτὸν . . . ἐκεῖνος ἐλέγξει*, pĕmpsō autŏn . . . ĕkeinŏs ĕlĕnxei, I will send Him . . . He will convict (**16.** 7, 8); *ἐκεῖνος . . . ὁδηγήσει*, ĕkeinŏs . . . hŏdēgēsei, He . . . shall guide (**16.** 13); *ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει*, ĕkeinŏs ĕmè dŏxasei, He Me shall glorify.

He is also described as to His attributes as the Spirit of truth, and grammatically *πνεῦμα*, pneuma, spirit, is neuter gender and takes the article and adjective in neuter gender:—*τὸ πνεῦμα το ἅγιον*, tŏ pneuma tŏ hagion the Spirit, the holy (**14.** 26); *τὸ πνεῦμα*, tŏ pneuma, the Spirit (**15.** 26; **16.** 13).

So *ὃ ὁ κόσμος ου δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτό, οὐδὲ γινώσκει αὐτό, ὑμεῖς γινῴσκετε αὐτό*, hŏ hŏ kŏsmŏs ou dunatai labein, hŏti ou theōrei, autŏ, oudĕ ginōskei autŏ; humeis ginōskete autŏ; literally, Which the world cannot receive because it beholdeth It not, neither knoweth It; ye know It. *ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ*, hŏ pĕmpsei hŏ pater; literally, Which the Father will send (**14.** 26, the two words, ŏ hŏ, ó hŏ, are different). *ὃ παρα τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται*, hŏ para tou patrŏs ekpŏreuĕtai; literally, Which from the Father proceedeth.

Note how the two usages are blended; observe the frequent use of ĕkeinos He (five times); see how it is used in **14.** 26 after the parenthetical or at any rate descriptive clause:—the "Holy Spirit, Whom (literally Which) the Father will send in My name, He shall teach." So in **15.** 26 observe:—"the Comforter Whom . . . the Spirit Which . . . He shall bear witness."

Observe, too, how many of the actions attributed clearly mark Him as a Divine Person, whilst there is also that Infinite Pervasiveness ascribed to Him whereof the word Spirit fitly tells. Compare also John **4.**, "God is Spirit."

Note the two promised comings of the Lord Jesus Christ:—The personal coming, the coming again of verse 3: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself"; and the coming representatively by the Paraclete, "I will not leave you orphans: I come unto you." This latter coming was fulfilled in some four and fifty days; to be particular, when the day of Pentecost was fully come. The personal coming, equally certain, is that for which we still wait.

Note in all that follows how fruitful the coming of the Paraclete was in its possibility. We say in its possibility, for there is much there that is promised conditionally. The personal coming of the Paraclete and His eternal abiding in us individually is unconditional. But He, the Spirit, may be quenched and resisted, hence the conditional character of the promises:—"I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him" (verse 21); "My Father will love him, and We (Father and Son) will come unto him and make Our abode with him" (verse 23).

Why does verse 31 end as it does, Arise, let us go hence? is a question we may well ask.

The Parable of the Vine.

The parable of the vine is a further expansion of the truth as to conditional abiding already commenced. Note that the fruit here is fruit for the enjoyment of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is represented under the figure of the husbandman. The Union, at the same time solemnly conditional and extremely intimate, of which this figure speaks, fitly brings in the thought of love. Love of the Father, love of the Son, love in the Holy Spirit.

Practical words of warning follow, and all that the Lord says to the eleven is guarded for us by the provision described in **14.** 26.

Well, these words reach an end and the Lord turns from His disciples to the Father and addresses Him in the memorable words of chapter **17.** We cannot now as we

would linger over this unique revelation of the mutual intercourse of the ineffable Trinity, and we hesitate to comment on such a sublime theme in any casual way.

Across the Kidron.

Immediately after, as we understand, the Lord crosses Kidron into the garden (Gethsemane) and John at once records the betrayal.

Matthew and Mark show that the Lord left the upper room after the hymn, which appears to have immediately followed the loaf and cup, and that it was after this that He foretold Peter's denial. It may be mere fancy, though we think not, but we are disposed to associate Peter's words, "Whither goest Thou?" (John **13.** 36), with the Lord's rising and leading them from the room as well as with His actual words as to His going. Then the contents of chapters **14., 15., 16., 17.** of John take their place naturally between verses 35 and 36 of Matthew **26.**, between verses 31 and 32 of Mark **14.**, between verses 39 and 40 of Luke **22.**, that is this conversation was on the Mount of Olives before they reached Gethsemane.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MATTHEW **26.** 36-56; MARK **14.** 32-52; LUKE **22.** 40-53; JOHN **18.** 1-11.

But looming black before Him
See His dread cross appear!
Oh well may we adore Him,
He bore our sorrows there!

GETHSEMANE.

THE shadow of the Cross now looms in its dread horror before the gaze of the Lord Jesus Christ. First He takes with Him Peter and James and John, as if perhaps He would have taken them yet further into His confidence as to that which was adding a deeper and a needless bitterness to His woe and sorrow. His soul, He said, was exceedingly sorrowful; but all He asked them was to abide and watch while He went on a stone's throw to confer with the One who alone was equal to His confidence in that dark hour.

We cannot believe that the Cup which He asked might if possible be removed from Him was the dread penalty of sin that was about to be exacted from Him. We remember that the shipmates of Jonah cast him into the sea with tears and regret when it was expedient that he should die that the whole crew perish not. Not so the people of Israel were about to conduct themselves on the morrow, not so the Pharisees who had already given the Traitor the thirty pieces of silver. So well had their master bound them to him in the toils of sin and hatred that with malicious eagerness they were about to hurry their Anointed King to a malefactor's doom, and couple His death as the atoning Victim with every ignominy and disgrace. It was this, as we believe, that led to His exceeding sorrow in Gethsemane, that found expression in that thrice repeated cry of anguish.

It is this, too, the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, which for ever bespeaks the condemnation of the world that knew Him not and knows Him not, that hated then and still hates.

There lies beneath its shadow,
But on the farther side,
The darkness of an awful grave[1]
That gapes both deep and wide;
And there between us stands the Cross,
His arms outstretched to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way
From that religious grave.

Then cometh Judas, and kisseth Him. So the cohort comes forward to take Him, and for a moment it seems as if His hour was not yet come, for at His words, "I am" they went backward and fell to the ground. Judas fell with the others I suppose, now first publicly exposed as the man who knew Him not, for certainly Peter and the rest fell not at that sound, which meant much to them.

How significant the zeal of Peter, though so useless; the cut-off ear, as Luke the beloved physician alone tells us, was restored.

Then they all forsook Him and fled. Some young man (I think we ought to be able to guess who he was) could only escape naked. If any dreads being made naked let him prefer being taken prisoner with Jesus to escaping. Peter followed afar off, and so did the other disciple known to the High Priest—evidently John.

[1]That is Christendom. See Proverbs 9. 13-18.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MATTHEW **26.** 57—**27.** 26; MARK **14.** 53—**15.** 15; LUKE **22.** 54—**32.** 25; JOHN **18.** 12—**19.** 16.[1]

THE HOLY PRISONER BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

WE learn from John that the Lord Jesus was at first brought before Annas and it might seem as if verses 19-24 of John **18.** recorded what took place before Annas, previously to the Lord being sent before Caiaphas. But although verse 24 appears to convey this meaning, it can hardly be so, because verse 19 distinctly says that it was the high priest who examined the Holy Prisoner. The exact meaning of verse 24 with the word οὖν, oun, "therefore," in it we cannot understand. This should make us very careful to avoid the dangerous temptation to suppose the word of doubtful authority because this word is omitted in the Greek Testament of Stephanus, and in the English Authorized Version. Better and safer far to say that we do not understand.

From Matthew and Mark we learn of the vain efforts to convict the Lord on false testimony. But even when they got two to perjure themselves by a travesty of the Lord's word, they failed to agree in their false testimony (Mark). Through all this the Holy Prisoner is silent, in spite of the appeal that He should defend Himself. But there was no need of this; no one can or ought to be expected to defend himself against an indefinite charge, or one for which there is not definite and concordant evidence.

We now read of adjuration, a process strange to English ears. It consists in putting a person on oath perforce to speak as to a certain matter; compare, for example, Leviticus **5.** 1, where it is counted sin to a man that having seen or known a matter, he is adjured to bear witness and fails to do so. See also Proverbs **29.** 24.

It seems to us that it was a gross perversion of justice on the part of Caiaphas, though worthy of his selfish pseudo-patriotism. At any rate the very nature of the interrogatory showed its impropriety. For if he believed that the

[1]See Appendix I., Page 182.

Lord Jesus was the Christ, it was the grossest blasphemy and profanity to allow Him to be brought before him. If on the other hand he did not believe, it is evident, as the event proved, that, like the *agent provocateur*, of continental governments, who entices poor victims into sin, he was tempting the Lord to say what he believed was blasphemy.

But this is no real cause for marvel; see Ecclesiastes **5.** 8. Besides Proverbs **27.** 19 tells us that

> "As in water face answereth to face,
> So the heart of man to man,"

and accordingly in the ruthless disregard of justice that Caiaphas showed we see as in a mirror what our own hearts are.

However the Lord accepts the challenge and bears the unequivocal testimony to His own person recorded in different forms in Matthew, Mark, Luke, but omitted in John.

Peter's Threefold Denial.

During these hours of the night when the Master was thus being examined before the High Priest, the wheat was being sifted (Luke **22.** 31, 32), and poor Peter made a sorry exhibition of himself; again a mirror wherein we may see our own hearts. There is a little difficulty about the details of Peter's threefold denial as recorded in the Gospels. We proceed briefly to comment thereupon.

1. The first temptation was from a maid of the high priest (Matthew **26.** 69, 70, Mark **14.** 66-68, Luke **22.** 56, 57, John **18.** 17, 18).

2. From Mark **14.** 69 (R.V.), we learn that this same maid after this said to those that stood by that he was one of them, whilst from Matthew **26.** 71 we learn that another maid did so. But Luke **22.** 58, 59, shows that it was a man—ἕτερος, hĕtĕrŏs, a different one (masculine)—who spoke to Peter himself and to whom he replied, "Ἄνθρωπε, οὐκ εἰμί, Anthrōpĕ ŏuk ĕimi, Man, I am not. Evidently there was some little talk amongst those standing by; perhaps Peter kept quiet for a few minutes, till the direct charge of the man was too much for him.

3. They that stood by, and in particular a kinsman of Malchus, are mentioned in connexion with the third denial.

The cock crew—poor Peter—but the Lord turned and looked upon him. It is Luke who gives us this reason for Peter's remembrance of the Lord's words.

Compare Numbers **6.** 25, for, of the triune blessing,

> "Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee,
> And be gracious unto thee"

is the blessing of the Word, the Eternal Son of God, Who became flesh.

The morning being come of that dread eventful day the Lord is led away to Pilate and they accuse Him—not apparently at first for calling Himself the Son of God. In the first place, they seem to have depended on a vague charge that He was an evildoer, then more specifically that He called Himself King of the Jews, and hence was a rival to the Cæsar.

Matthew gives us some account of Pilate's anxiety to release Him, especially after hearing his wife's dream. Mark is briefer. Luke alone records that Pilate sent Him to Herod as being a Galilean. John gives the most detailed account of the travesty of justice; showing, as do all four, that Pilate delivered the Lord to be crucified just because he was carried away by popular clamour, and had in him no manliness or courage to say "No" and stand to it. Over against this poor wretched weakling set the four Hebrew boys, Daniel and his companions, and let those who wish to become Men of God, remember that such they cannot be unless as boys they learn with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to say "No" when there is occasion, and there to stand. Poor Pilate, representative of the World's strong Empire! but his strength unhelped by God was as nought when the Devil brought his forces to bear.

So the murderer was released and the Righteous One was delivered to be crucified; not merely to be put to death, but to be slain with every circumstance of ignominy by which Satan could mark his hatred and that of his poor dupes; whilst at the same time God showed His wisdom and His power, interposing the Cross between His people and the religious world.

> Then glory to the Father,
> For us His Son He gave;
> To Christ, Kinsman—Redeemer,
> He died our souls to save.

CHAPTER L.

MATTHEW **27.** 27-66; MARK **15.** 16-47; LUKE **23,** 26-56; JOHN **19.** 17-42.

PERHAPS there is nothing in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded by the four Evangelists of which it is so easy to set the four accounts side by side and recognize their variety in unity, and especially their unity in variety as the narrative of the Crucifixion.

From Matthew and Mark we learn of the preliminary brutalities of the Roman soldiers, concerning which Luke and John are silent. From John alone we learn that at the first setting forth the Lord carried the cross for Himself, whilst we find from Matthew, Mark, Luke that it became necessary to impress Simon of Cyrene to bear His load. Only Luke tells of the Lord's words to the daughters of Jerusalem.

All four gospels record that He was crucified with two malefactors—robbers, the place being described thus :—

εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Γολγοθά, ὃς ἐστι λεγόμενος Κρανίου τόπος.
eis tŏpŏn lĕgŏmĕnŏn Gŏlgŏtha, hŏs ĕsti lĕgŏmĕnŏs Kraniou tŏpŏs.
into place called Golgotha, which is called of a skull place
(Matthew).

ἐπὶ Γολγοθᾶ τόπον, ὅ ἐστι μεθερμηνεύομενον Κρανίου τόπος.
epi Gŏlgŏtha tŏpŏn, hŏ esti mĕthĕrmēneuŏmĕnŏn Kraniŏu tŏpŏs.
to Golgotha place, which is being interpreted of a skull place
(Mark).

ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Κράνιον.
ĕpi tŏn tŏpŏn tŏn kalouměnŏn Kraniŏn.
to the place the called skull (Luke).

εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου τόπον, ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστι Γολγοθᾶ.
eis tŏn lĕgŏmĕnŏn Kraniou tŏpŏn, hŏ lĕgĕtai Hĕbraïsti Gŏlgŏtha.
into the called of a skull place, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.
(John).

Golgotha is Hebrew.
Κράνιος, is Greek (hence cranium, cranial).
Calvaria, Calvary is Latin.
Skull is English.

The occurrence of Calvary in the English Authorized Version is due to the fact that the Bible had been previously translated from the Latin Vulgate, and therefore Calvary was retained as a proper name.

Again, all the Gospels record that the soldiers parted His garments among them. But while Matthew, Mark, Luke all speak of their casting lots, only John explains the special reason for casting lots, namely, that the tunic was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Surely when we remember Hannah's care for Samuel, we may legitimately suppose that this garment was of Mary's weaving.

The Eight Utterances on the Cross.

It is John, who records this, who alone records the Lord's words to Mary and to himself, which we count the second and third of His eight recorded utterances on the cross:—

2. "Woman, behold, thy son."

3. "Behold, thy mother."

For we judge that the words of Luke **23.** 34 come first:—

1. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

But whether right or wrong as to the order of these, there can, we think, be no doubt that these three were the first three.

The Lord being crucified at the third hour, we read not only of mocking of chief priests and scribes and elders, and of soldiers, but also that the two robbers reproached Him (Matthew, Mark); but ere the sixth hour came—the one black noontide of creation's history—one of these malefactors had been moved by the marvellous meekness and kindness of the Suffering One; and when his fellow railed, "Art not Thou the Christ? Save Thyself and us," he turned and rebuked him, and though being ignorant of the Lord's dignity, he called Him with marked impropriety [1] "Jesus," yet there was some little faith—shall we say as a "grain of mustard seed"? that drew from the Lord the fourth word recorded only by Luke:—

[1] A very important truth is touched upon here, and we would in this connexion earnestly direct the prayerful attention of the reader to John **13.** 13: "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." (J. C. R.)

4. "Amen, I say unto thee, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'"

Then was there a fufilment of the word of Isaiah

"When Thou shalt make His soul a guilt-offering.
He shall see a seed."

Then came darkness that covered the land (or the earth) from noontide to the ninth hour—that would be till some time before or after what we call three o'clock, according to the time of the year. This darkness is recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke. We look first at Matthew and Mark, who alone record the cry:—

5. "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani"—that is, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"—which we take to be fifth of the recorded utterances. We read from the Revised Version, margin, for the Greek verb is in the aorist tense. On referring to Psalm **22.** we find the answer to this cry—

"Thou art holy."

It was because the Lord was the Sin-bearer that this terrible woe was His.

According to the Divine teaching in the Levitical law we find four special types of the Lord's death, which we thus enumerate:

I. The sin-offering.
II. The guilt-offering, or trespass-offering.
III. The burnt-offering, or ascending offering.
IV. The sacrifice of peace-offerings.

And as we believe these are definitely to be connected with the four accounts of the Lord's work in the four Gospels, we will briefly indicate them, though we do not regard this as the place for detailed exposition of the manifold efficacy of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We note, then, that only Matthew and Mark record this particular utterance of the Lord, and hence conclude that the thought of suffering for sin is prominent here. To us it seems clear that the Divine punishment for sin is especially to be found in this forsaking by God, in this exclusion from His presence, which it appears that we are to connect specially with the dread darkness of these three awful hours.

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When the Incarnate Maker died
For man, His creature's sin.

The difference between the sin-offering and the guilt-offering seems to be that the former contemplates the demands of Divine law, and the latter the requirements of the individual conscience.

Thus, for example, in Leviticus **4.** 13-21 we read of a sin-offering for the whole people as well as for individuals in the same chapter. But in chapter **5.** a man is contemplated who finds himself to be guilty, and he brings a guilt-offering; and yet the guilt-offering is not an altogether different thing, but is itself a kind of sin-offering, or shall we say the sin-offering in a particular aspect, so that Leviticus **5.** 6 reads: "He shall bring his guilt-offering . . . a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering." Thus the two things are blended. Note the connexion of guilt-offering with forgiveness in Leviticus **5.** 16. Compare, too, the law of the leper's cleansing in Leviticus **14.** But note that in Leviticus **16.** there is no guilt-offering. Forgiveness on the day of atonement is dealt with differently. We might perhaps say that to bring a guilt-offering suggests human responsibility—

By faith I lay my hand
Upon that head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my crime

whilst on the day of atonement we see Divine sovereignty in connexion with the scapegoat:

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
And I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

Then, as we have always found Mark to deal more personally and individually with sinners than Matthew, we associate the former with the guilt-offering, and the latter with the sin-offering.

Turning to Luke, we still read of those three hours of darkness which seem to shut man out altogether. Note, too, that here in both the first and last cry of the Lord we have an address, "Father." In this the Luke account stands alone. It appears to us that in Luke we have the Lord's atoning work as typified by the burnt or ascend-

ing offering, which was all for God. Christ through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. This is atonement for righteousness, not for sin. That is to say, it is the act of righteousness accomplished by Christ which is imputed to those who believe on Him:

> How perfect is the righteousness
> In which unspotted beauteous dress
> The saints have always stood.

In John we read nothing of the darkness that shut man out, for here we have the sacrifice of peace-offerings, in which God, the Priest, and the worshipper all have a part. Here is food. This aspect of the death is spoken of under the title, the blood of the Son of Man; whilst the blood of Christ tells us of the burnt-offering; and the blood of the Lamb and the blood of Jesus the Son of God speak of the sin-offering and the guilt-offering, yet so as they are all linked together each to each and altogether. We say each to each, because, for example, in alike the sin-offering, the guilt-offering and the sacrifice of peace-offerings the fat was offered as burnt-offering; for example again, the sin and guilt-offering are closely linked; for yet another example, there was food for priests in the flesh of certain sin-offerings and guilt-offerings, for all which see Leviticus under those headings.

After the fifth cry we learn from Matthew and Mark that the Lord was given a sponge full of vinegar put upon a reed. From John we learn what the others do not mention that this followed His sixth utterance:—

6. "I thirst";

and that He then said:—

7. "It is finished,"

and bowed His head and gave up His spirit. One of these, probably the latter cry, is described by Matthew and Mark.

"Jesus cried again with a loud voice."

"Jesus uttered a loud voice."

This is supposing we take the reading of Luke **23.** 46, as in the Revised Version text (and Authorized Version). Then He lastly said:

8. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and having said this, He gave up the ghost" (or expired).

(If we read as the Revised Version margin of Luke **23.** 46 these last words were those which were uttered with a loud voice. This, however, seems unlikely.)

Care must be taken to distinguish between

(1) The wine mingled with myrrh and gall offered before the crucifixion.

(2) The vinegar offered during the first three hours by the mocking soldiers.

(3) The vinegar given and received after the ninth hour.

The actual death is described by the four Evangelists thus:—

ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα	ἐξέπνευσε(ν).
aphēkĕ tŏ pneuma	ĕxĕpneuse(n).
yielded up or dismissed the spirit	breathed out, expired.

παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα.

paredōke to pneuma

gave up or gave back or delivered up the spirit.

The loud voice immediately precedent showed the undiminished strength and vitality of the Sufferer.

A Moment of Triumph.

It was a moment of triumph for Him, spite of the bitter and cruel anguish. He had offered Himself to God—His sacrifice was accepted as a perfect one, He was the Lamb that God had provided. He now lays down His life; He dies.

As to human responsibility [1] and guilt, they took Him and by wicked hands did crucify and slay. But none the less, it was true that they took not His life. He laid it down, having received authority so to do; and the spirit returned to God who gave it.

The soul of the blessed Lord went down into Sheol, and by the blood of the covenant He gave a blessed deliverance, and no doubt those of whom Matthew tells us that they re-entered their bodies after His resurrection and visited many, were just so many witnesses of the multitude of captives that He delivered.

The Holy Body of the Lord Laid in Joseph's Tomb.

As to the holy body of the Lord, it was laid in Joseph's tomb. But first, the absolute and unquestionable reality of

[1] See Appendix I., Page 182.

the death must receive clear and unequivocal testimony from the enemies of the Lord.

First, then, ere the end of the day, ere sunset, the soldiers were bidden to put the poor sufferers out of their misery, and the two robbers were sent to Sheol (Hades, Hell) that same day, though they might have lingered on. But of these two, whilst one went to his own place, even to Sheol beneath, the other joined his Saviour in that upper Sheol, which the presence of the Redeemer converted into Paradise.

But when they (the Roman soldiers) came to Jesus, they saw that He was dead already—we are reading from John: we pass over the mention of the fulfilment of prophecy; we note that the soldier pierced His side, and there came forth blood and water. Let it be well noted that the value of this lay in the evidence it afforded. The blood speaks of the manifestation of death. Already the Lord was dead; already there was joy in the presence of God in heaven; and gladness amongst the patriarchs in Sheol; but what the soldier did was to show by that stream of blood and water that indeed the Lord had died.

Here, too, in John, we read of Joseph and Nicodemus burying the body; but it is clear from Mark that Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body before the soldiers had acted as described in John. This was in the wisdom of God, for now we get Pilate enquiring of the Centurion and receiving from him adequate legal proof of the death, to which the incidents recorded in John come to be added as additional evidence. But it goes further than this; for the chief priests and Pharisees, we learn from Matthew, were so satisfied as to the death, that they only wished the tomb guarded lest the body should be stolen.

We may just note that the late hour of the death and the much described as following it before the Sabbath leads us to agree with those who believe that the Crucifixion was on what we call Thursday.

CHAPTER LI.

MATTHEW **28**; MARK **16.**; LUKE **24.**; JOHN **20., 21.**; ACTS **1.** 1-11; 1 CORINTHIANS **15.** 1-8.

THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL AND EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED.

WHAT remains for our consideration may be conveniently divided under four heads:

1. The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the visit of the women to the tomb.
2. The Infallible Proofs.
3. The teaching and commissioning during the forty days.
4. The Ascension.

Or again, we may say as to time that we have to take account of

1 The Resurrection morning.
2. The remainder of the first Lordly day.
3. The following Lordly day and subsequent occasions.
4. The fortieth day.

The distinctions just given may seem pedantic, but we think they will help to prevent needless confusion between the six accounts, and enable us to perceive the distinct narratives given in their mutual relation.

As to the actual resurrection itself, we are told but little. Matthew seems to give most particulars. There was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended (or perhaps we should say "the Lord's angel," there seems a little doubt as to whether this might not be the Jehovah's angel of the Old Testament, whom there is some reason, perhaps, to believe is a unique personage) from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The sight of this heavenly visitor frightens the watchers, and they see nothing else. Off they go, and the insane folly of verses 11 to 15 follows. How fond some religious men seem to grow of lies and lying!

This young man, Mark tells us—surely it is the same —is found by the women just inside, and to them he speaks in the words recorded in the three Gospels, Luke, however, mentioning another as being with him. In each please carefully note what is said. Observe that they are sent to the disciples, and especially to Peter, to whom they are to say that the Lord is to be seen by them in Galilee.

Let us now turn to John's account of these early hours. Here Mary Magdalene is mentioned alone, and the angels are quite left out. Clearly it is the intense personal and individual character of this Gospel that we see here. Such as it is, the difficulty lies in understanding how this account fits in with the others. We may just suggest a few possibilities to help, perhaps, in meeting the difficulties.

When Mary Magdalene rushed off rather hastily to Peter and John, as recorded in John, she probably had not seen the angel; the angels were not seen by Peter and John. Whether the meeting of the disciples with the angels miscarried, as the meeting of ordinary human beings may, or whether it was simply that it was not the Lord's will that the angels should be visible to the disciples we cannot say, probably the former. Then in John **20.** 11 we read of Mary Magdalene that she stood without, weeping. Now there might possibly have preceded this that interview with the angels of which Matthew, Mark, Luke speak. We are not quite sure whether these three Gospels state that Mary Magdalene was one of the women actually addressed by the angels.

The Appearances of the Lord to Mary Magdalene.

We next observe the appearance of the Lord to Mary Magdalene; which is without exception the most pathetic incident in all the Scriptures. For mark that the Lord had not yet ascended to the Father. This ascent into Heaven spoken of in Psalm **24.** verses 7, 8, as distinct from verses 9, 10, is that entrance when in His resurrection body He paid His first tribute of adoration to the Father and fulfilled, as we understand, what was typified by the first entrance of Aaron on the day of atonement, as see Leviticus **16.** verses 11 to 14.

We are laying stress, it will be observed, on the words "Touch Me not" of verse 17, with the following explanation, as contrasted with verses 9 and 10 of Matthew **28.** to show that between these two appearances of the Lord, that to Mary Magdalene and that to the women, there had been an ascent unto the Father and God. Hence the deep pathos, hence the infallible proof of the beating of a human heart in that resurrection body. For the tears of a woman stopped Him ere His triumphal entry as

> ". . . the King of Glory,
> Jehovah strong and mighty,
> Jehovah mighty in battle."

The earliness of this period is so emphasized that in spite of what we have said above we think it possible that it may be after this, namely, between verses 17 and 18 of John **20.**, that we should put the angelic message recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke. But we do not know, and perhaps are not meant to.

It may be convenient here to refer to Mark **16.** 9-20 and to say that while the present writer makes not the smallest pretence to be an authority on textual criticism, he wishes to record his present judgment that though these verses are omitted in the very valuable MSS. ℵ and B they yet form part of the inspired records. Here again we have the first appearance to Mary Magdalene mentioned. Note verse 11: they disbelieved—this may seem contradictory to John **20.** 8, for instance. But there were probably great fluctuations in the state of their minds and hearts, till the other Advocate came.

His Appearances to Men.

Later in the day the Lord appears to others, and it is in His appearances to men that we must look for the infallible proofs of His resurrection; no women are mentioned in 1 Corinthians **15.** See thus how the Lord first appears to women for their own benefit only, afterwards to men whose testimony was of value. This shows the value the Lord sets on an individual.

First of all then amongst the men the Lord appeared to Peter, then to Cleopas and another (2). We cannot now

tarry to comment on the Emmaus journey, but commend it for earnest study. Back without delay they come to find that the eleven were gathered, and that the Lord had appeared to Simon, and then the Lord took His place amongst them (3). Note that the apostles thus together are called in Mark **16.** 14 and in Luke **24.** 33 the eleven, though we learn from John **20.** 24 that Thomas was missing. This is interesting and instructive. (But Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians **15.** of the twelve. Was Matthias with them on any occasion of this kind?).

Then from John **20.** 26 we read of a manifestation on the following Lordly day, Thomas being present; this makes 4.

John **21.** gives us an account so well known of another manifestation which we will count as 5.

Now returning to Matthew **28.** see verse 16 and note the R.V. "But," not "Then" as A.V. incorrectly reads. Here then we have an interview which seems to us to be different to any recorded elsewhere; we may count it as so without suggesting exactly when it took place, but certainly it was not on the Resurrection day. This fitly closes the Gospel of the Son of David, the Son of Abraham; the ascension not being mentioned here.

Mark gives us in verses 12, 13 a brief note of the Emmaus story, and in verse 14 we have a mention probably of what we have numbered above as 3.

But what of verse 15? Well, we are disposed to think that it is not closely linked to verse 14, but it records words spoken at an interview not elsewhere mentioned. There is, we suppose, an interval of time between verses 14 and 15, and between verses 18 and 19. We will call the manifestation of verses 15, 16, 17 number 7.

Luke's account of the third manifestation seems to continue to verse 43. The contents of verses 44-49 appear to have been spoken later; we number them as 8.

Here in verses 50, 51 of Luke **24.** as in Mark **16.** 19, 20, we get the inspired account of the Lord's ascension, also contained in Acts **1.** 9, 11 number 12.

The earlier verses of Acts **1.** scarcely allow of being portioned into definite interviews with the Lord, except that verses 4, 5 appear strictly parallel with Luke **24.** 48, 49.

In 1 Corinthians **15.** 1-7, Paul recounts certain definite witnesses to the Lord's resurrection which are

To Cephas, which we have taken to be first;

To the twelve, which may be one of those we have numbered third or fourth, or another manifestation altogether;

To five hundred brethren at once, not mentioned in the Gospels: we will call it 9;

To James, not elsewhere mentioned, say 10;

To all the apostles; this can hardly be identified with any in the Gospels: let us call it 11;

The manifestation to Paul after the ascension we will not here notice.

We have enumerated these, which, including that at the ascension, we count as being about 12 different manifestations, in order to present them in a tabular form to show what are given in each of the records respectively.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	1 Corinthians
1			**24.** 34			**15.** 5 (Cephas)
2		**16.** 12, 13	,, 13-35			
3		,, 14	,, 36-43	**20.** 19-23		
4				,, 26-29		
5				**21.**		
6	**28.** 16-20					
7		,, 15, 16, 17				
8			,, 44-49		**1.** 4, 5	
9						,, 6 (500)
10						,, 7 (James)
11						,, 7 (apostles)
12		,, 19, 20	,, 50-51		,, 9-11	

As to the order of the above, we only know that we have 1, 2, 3 in the right order, that 4 is a week later, and 5 follows 4 Whether 6, 7, 8 should be in the order above given, or any other, or whether they or either of them should precede 5, we do not know. Neither can we be quite sure that 3 and 7 refer to different times, or again 3 and 8 may be at the same time. Still the above scheme, however faulty, may at least serve a purpose as suggestive, and prevent any reader from thoughtlessly reading either of the chapters as the story of a day.

Conclusion.

In the articles which we now bring to a conclusion, we are sensible of much shortcoming, but we have felt constrained to draw attention to various differences between the Gospels and even to emphasize certain apparent discrepancies fairly and boldly, that our readers may be led to approach the subject boldly and yet in fulness of faith, and however we have failed herein, we have ourselves had such fulfilment of the promise of watering to waterers (Proverbs **11.** 25) as leads us to anticipate Divine blessing on our feeble effort to encourage earnest study of the God-breathed narrative in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

To God th' eternal Spirit,
'Tis He reveals the Son,
We praise Thy holy merit,
Jehovah, Three in One. Amen.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

APPENDIX I.

Correspondence.

Relating to Chapter II.

With much interest and help have I read and considered the notes for systematic study of the Gospels, more especially chapter II.

Matthew **1.** 1-17. This portion, which many of us regarded as one of the less interesting portions of Scripture, you have thought well to point out to us its great importance in such a manner as encourages us younger ones to give more heed thereto. A manner which not only causes us to think, but invites us to speak. I refer specially now to page 11 where you tell us that "the numeration of the generations in Matthew offers difficulties which are beyond the ability of the present writer to solve." and again, "It is clear that we have here that which we cannot understand."

This spirit leads us to cry with the Psalmist, "Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; Teach me Thy paths, lead me in Thy truth, and teach me." God gives nothing to him who wants nothing. For is our strength not made perfect in weakness?

Being thus minded I take the liberty to forward a few thoughts upon the difficulty which this portion offers, feeling confident that you will not consider my spirit or manner of expression presumptuous. I merely submit my thoughts for further consideration, and as one willing to sit at the feet of others and learn. I write as follows—

The difficulty seems to be to arrange the generations into three series of fourteen each, according to verse 17.

Now it occurs to me that but for verse 17 we possibly never would have thought of making any arrangement; we simply would have followed the line from Abraham unto

the Christ. If so, why not adhere strictly to the three divisions *as given therein*, viz. :

From Abraham unto David (1),
From David unto the removal to Babylon (2),
From the removal to Babylon unto the Christ (3).

A difficulty certainly does arise by counting the second division from David unto Jechoniah, but verse 17 distinctly states from David unto the carrying away to Babylon—from a person to a period.

In other words, as the first division begins *from* Abraham, so the second also begins *from* David. The first extends to David and includes him, the second extends to the carrying away to Babylon, that is, to an epoch, and not a person ; and therefore the persons who are mentioned as coeval with this epoch (about the time of carrying away—verse 11), are not reckoned before it; after the epoch the enumerations begin again with Jechoniah and end with the Christ.

In this way the three divisions are made out thus :

From Abraham unto David, 14 generations.
From David unto Josiah, 14 generations.
From Josiah unto the Christ, 14 generations.

Kindly bear with me adding a few words of comment. The special design of these verses is to establish by proofs of an incontestable kind that the Jesus born in Bethlehem was no usurper, but the long promised and divinely predicted Messiah, that as Son of Abraham all blessings for man and the earth were centred in Him, and as Son of David He was the legal heir to the throne of Judah.

Thus His genealogy is traced up to *two persons*, David and Abraham, the roots and sources of royalty and blessing to Jew and Gentile. This, I am sure, is clear to all. But if God desires to teach us by counting *from* Abraham and *from* David, surely His counting *from* the carrying away to Babylon is not without meaning.

The primary teaching of the portion, as we have said, undoubtedly is to establish the Messiahship of Christ and His legal title to Judah's throne ; but does God not desire to stir up the minds of His people by calling to remembrance former days? Surely this is so.

Let us look at the divisions in their order—

(1) Why count from Abraham?

Because the Lord had sworn by Himself unto Abraham —"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis **22.** 18).

(2) Why count from David?

Because of the fact that David was the first king of God's choice and unto him the promise was given: "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Samuel **7.** 12, 13). All this speaks of the abiding faithfulness of Him who promised.

(3) Why count from the removal to Babylon?

Is it not to remind His people (by way of warning), of a time when (because of their disobedience through unbelief in Him Who is great in might and strong in battle) they were given unto the hand of the heathen, and they who hated them ruled over them? But for their unfaithfulness never would the willows of Babylon have been adorned with the harps of Zion, while her daughter sat and wept as she remembered her courts.

Thus we see the wondrous grace of God warning His people by reminding them of their unfaithfulness and an oppressor's rule, under which they had groaned, while upon the other hand He proves His faithfulness by announcing that the promised ruler—whose goings forth are of old, from everlasting—*had come forth.*

Did they hear? Alas, no! They rejected God's Ruler, and would not heed His warning, and as a nation their cry still is, "We have no King but Cæsar."

Yes, rejected by the nation He was, but as now, so then the few were in the mind of God, for this (and only this) Gospel tells us of those who did enquire where is the King of the Jews that is born? (chapter **2.** and 2 R.V.).

When as individuals or companies we become too popular, we may be sure there is something wrong.

As a nation, we have said, they made their choice, but they have yet to taste of the rule which they chose. A

rule which shall beget a deeper sorrow than ever Babylon's captives knew, but from under which God (as of old) shall hear their cry, regard their distress, and will deliver.

> Far, far away His people oft have strayed,
> Yet His loving kindness never is delayed.

Then shall they know that the Lord is the faithful God, Who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations.

With greetings in the Lord, I am, sincerely yours in Him,

A. McG.

Relating to Chapter III.

Immanu-El.

J. W. has a little difficulty in connexion with the word Immanu-El, meaning "God is with us." He points out that El is at the end of the word, and compares Beth-El, which means "House of God." Seeing that El is not the beginning but the end of the word, he asks why must we not interpret Immanu-El: "With us He is God."

Our reply to this is that the different tongues which men have spoken since the Babel dispersion differ amongst other things, much in the significance which is given to the order of the words. Our native tongue, English, is practically devoid of those inflexions which in many other languages are used to distinguish, for example, the subject from the object of the verb. Thus John beats James, and James beats John are two sentences which in English have quite different meanings—the place of John and James in the sentence indicating which beats and which is beaten respectively. But in many, not to say most other languages, this would be rather indicated by the termination of the words standing for John and James, or by the form of articles prefixed thereto.

We quote this extreme instance to explain why an English reader is apt to lay a stress on the order of words which in many other languages would have no such significance. Thus Tregelles' Hebrew Reading Lessons will

show the most illiterate reader that in Genesis **1.** 1, 3, 4, for example, the order of the Hebrew words is, "In beginning created God," "And said God," "and saw God," "and separated God."

The Greek of Matthew **1.** 23 reads Μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός. Měth' hēmōn hŏ Thĕŏs, "With us *is* the God." We understand the copula "is" to be clearly implied. "The God" is marked by the article as the subject of the sentence, whilst "with us" is the predicate or assertion concerning the subject. C. M. L.

Relating to Chapters XII. and XIII.

The Man at Bethesda's Pool.

In concluding our notes on John **4.** (chapter XII.), we spoke of the absence of any hint in John **5.** to indicate the period of the Lord's ministry when the healing of the sick man at Bethesda pool took place. In making this statement we overlooked a sentence in the last paragraph of this chapter which seems to give some very definite help in the matter. We invite our younger readers to search the last eighteen verses of John **5.** for an indication of a very important event which must have occurred between the healing of the nobleman's son at Cana and that of the sick man at Bethesda's pool, and to send in the result of their search.

In response to our invitation, several of our readers have communicated with us in reference to the period of the Lord's ministry when He healed the sick man at Bethesda's pool.

J. W. writes of a little book entitled a Harmony of the Gospels, which a friend has lent him, and gives a list of many of the Lord's signs recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke as occurring between the healing of the nobleman's son, John **4.**, and that of the Bethesda impotent man. But as no reason for this arrangement is given from Scripture, we pass it over, although it may be quite correct, because

our desire is that our readers may search out the indications of order as contained in the divine record.

Another friend, who omits to sign his name, directs attention to verse 36 (chapter **5.**): "The very works that I do, bear witness of Me," and suggests that this reads very like what He spake in the temple, when He went up in secret as recorded in John **7.** 10, and he therefore is disposed to think that this happened between the two miracles. But the similarity of language used by the Lord is scarcely sufficient to justify us in supposing that the order in John is not that in which the events occurred. John, we think, generally follows the order of time, and John **7.** must refer to rather a late period in the Lord's life.

A. A. directs attention to the very important 33rd verse of John **5.**: "Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness to the Truth," and connects this quite rightly, we believe, with John **1.** 19-38, showing that John **5.** comes after John **1.** 19-38.

C. B. D. writes: The Lord, in reproving the Jews for their unbelief, says, "He (John) was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a reason to rejoice in his light . . . " They had been willing enough to listen to his teaching for a season, but had soon tired of his doctrine. So far we think our correspondent is right, but she adds that she thinks the Lord healed the sick man at Bethesda after John was beheaded, and with this view A. G. S. and G. E. H. are in agreement.

Our own thought was that the words "Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light" clearly indicated that the time was after the betrayal of the Baptist. We think, however, that it was probably during his imprisonment and before his murder. The great Desert Meal which Matthew, Mark, Luke connect rather closely with John's beheading is recorded in John **6.** as occurring after these things.

We put on record these brief notes of what our correspondents have written, and make these comments thereupon, and then commend the subject back for reconsideration.

C. M. L.

Relating to Chapter XXI.

Simple and Unaffected Pleasures.

R. G. D. asks whether the simple and unaffected pleasures mentioned in chapter XXI. mean mere bodily relaxation and physical enjoyments; and if so, what authority exists for the assumption that the Lord Jesus had any enjoyment of such.

We might write pages in answer to this inquiry, for it goes to the whole root of that which is comely in the behaviour of Christians, and especially of those who are young in years; and at the same time touches a more vital question of what the incarnation really meant.

In a desire to be brief we will chiefly refer to physical and bodily enjoyment, but it must be remembered that this cannot be sundered from pleasures which belong more particularly to the mind.

When Jehovah returns to Zion and dwells in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is called the city of Truth and the mountain of Jehovah of Hosts the Holy Mountain, then the streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

Who made these boys and girls? Who gave them their love of play, of healthful exercise? Who is it that prepares man for his life work, as He prepares the higher animals, the horse, the dog, the lion for their life work, by play in early days? He himself was once a little boy, who played at His mother's knee. Can it be denied? Can it be doubted? Else it were the nature of angels which He took and not the nature of men.

Whether in reference to the Holy One Himself, or to that which follows as to comeliness of behaviour in His disciples, let there be the clearest distinction between what we have called simple and unaffected pleasures and those corrupt enjoyments which take their place as sinful man develop with his debased taste.

No sane Christian fathers or mothers but would enjoy the sight of their children running races together, but they might well weep if their boys took part in many of the athletic contests that are in vogue.

Who would forbid Christian boys from playing cricket or football? but who would not warn them with all earnestness against the evil influences of the public football ground or the county cricket match?

The mother seeing her girls dancing for glee on the garden grass may thank Him who has given childhood such lightness of heart; but the mother who permits or encourages that love of dress and of display, that frivolity of conduct and worse that may lead to the ball-room and to the dancing saloon, where they will find a congenial soil, has but herself to blame if in later years she weeps over women daughters who give themselves to pleasure and are dead while they live.

In all the range of human behaviour that may be pleasing to God, we believe the Lord of Glory was the Perfect Example and Pattern. C. M. L.

Relating to Chapter XXXIII.

Luke **11.** 41, R.V.: "Howbeit give FOR alms those things which are within; and behold, all things are clean unto you." The word "FOR" seems to me to have decided weight.

As regards the expression "those things which are within," may it not refer to the preceding expression, "but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness" —seeing that, if their inward part, *extortion and wickedness*, were given up as an alms-deed, all things would indeed be "clean"?

The word "behold" in verse 41 would thus seem to throw open a door from darkness into light.

May I say that for absolute faithfulness the Revised Version increasingly appears (to me at least) far superior to all others. I say so out of gratitude. R. G. D.

Relating to Chapters XLIX. and L.

Two friends ask for evidence that John was the other disciple mentioned in John **18.** 15, 16, and suggest that Judas, the traitor, is here referred to.

Would it be said that Judas followed the Lord Jesus, together with Peter, as see verse 15? Peter at this point would have known Judas to be a traitor, and he had drawn his sword in defence of the Lord. Is he likely to have been brought in by one he knew to be a traitor, or to have had anything to do with him?

John seems to omit his own name here in the same way that he does in John **20.** 3, 8. Surely this is the same "other disciple" in both cases. The language seems to imply this.

One asks if the manner of the death of the Lord Jesus was in accordance with the will of God; or, in other words, were ungodly men doing what God had purposed in putting the Lord to death in the manner they did.

We desire to refer to this question with due diffidence. But the sign of Jonah is very significant; for his shipmates cast him into the sea with sorrow, saying, "Let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood." Whereas the people of Israel cried, "His blood be on us and on our children." Moreover, though it was needful for One to die for the people, and that thereby the children of God should be gathered, we do not understand from Scripture that this needed the shameful death of the Cross. Nevertheless, God overruled even this, and by it we are not only gathered but separated, as see Galatians and Hebrews. Note also the words "with wicked hands." As our correspondent says, the manner of the death was wholly man's act, man's responsibility, and an evidence of man's deep, deplorable wickedness. Nevertheless, even the piercing of the hands and the feet was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. C. M. L.

APPENDIX II.

Concerning Chapter VIII.

Abstaining from Wine.

We do not think that any lover of the truth with an unprejudiced mind can question for a moment what Dr. Luxmoore says, and would emphasise that what he refers to is the pure wine from the grape, which has undergone, of course, the process of fermentation, and of which we read, "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man" (Psalm **104.** 14). The sin is surely in the abuse of God's gifts. Besides, our departed friend adds: Of abstinence at times for rightful purposes we say nothing; the Lord Himself practised this. Of the principles inculcated in Romans **14.** and 1 Corinthians **8.** we do not now speak.

The God-breathed injunction given to Timothy, "Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" will, we believe, give more light on the matter than may appear on the surface. Two facts seem to stand out very prominently in this scripture.

1st. That for some reason or another Timothy evidently was a total abstainer, presumably from the principle of example or expediency.

2nd. That the apostle Paul does not upbraid him for his being so, but enjoins him to use a little wine as a medicine.

Now when we take into consideration that this was written at a very late day in the apostle's lifetime, and that both he and Timothy had become conversant with the condition of things existing in more Western lands, it is all very suggestive.

We think that under all circumstances and considerations the better course is to abstain from all alcoholic beverages, not by any means from any prohibition of the same as given in the Scriptures, but purely from the standpoint of expediency and example. If taken at all it is better to use them as a medicine. J. C. R.

APPENDIX III.

Concerning Chapter XV.

Marked Testament.

Perhaps some will not agree with the remarks about the Marked Testament, but Dr. Luxmoore's well-known abhorrence at the mere suggestion of any one tampering with the word of God—adding thereto or detracting therefrom—is enough to account for the language used.

Possibly what gave rise to the Marked Testament was a sincere desire to assist those seeking the Saviour in making certain texts which have been much used unto this end more readily seen as, for example, John **3.** 16 and **5.** 24.

Then again, apparently, Dr. Luxmoore had in mind the perverted idea of the Gospel so much in evidence to-day, namely, to point sinners to Christ, and when that end is accomplished unto their salvation as sinners to leave them there utterly oblivious that the mandate is to "make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" (Matthew **28.** 19, 20); "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation . . . instructing us" (Titus **2.** 11, 12).

See also chapter XL., where Dr. Luxmoore says: We are apt sometimes to speak lightly or ask as to a person being saved, when what is meant comes far short of what is meant in the word of God by salvation. J. C. B.

ERRATUM.

Page 143, line 15, should read—Therefore—instead of—There.

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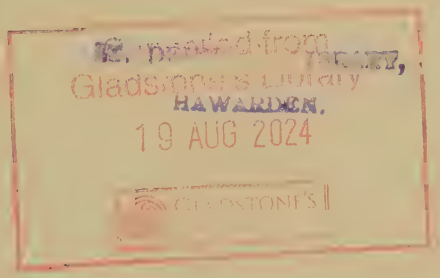
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